

**Establishing a Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology:
Solving Key Problems to Enable Success**

**A Report
of the
North Carolina Agriscience and Biotechnology
Regional School Planning Commission**

**Submitted to:
the North Carolina JOBS Study Commission,
the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, and
the State Board of Education**

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Executive Summary

Senate Bill 1199 established the North Carolina Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission (the Commission) to address issues surrounding development of a regional school and to recommend a location for a regional school. The Commission developed its recommendations methodically, addressing each of the primary issues identified in the legislation: governance, funding, personnel, student admission and assignment, transportation, and school food services. Commission members also identified and addressed issues around school accountability in a regional setting. This report is the product of the Commission's deliberations, and its recommendations are summarized below. Details of each recommendation may be found in the body of the report.

- **Governance:** Establish a Board of Directors for each campus that offers representation of participating districts, parents, the regional business community, and higher education partners.
- **Funding:** Achieve the funding levels needed to develop a strong experiential learning experience using a hybrid funding model that employs multiple funding sources, including district buy-in, investment funds, private funds, and state funds. Use existing capital funding mechanisms and procedures to address facilities costs.
- **Personnel:** Assign hiring authority to the School's Board of Directors, using a contract-only approach to ensure flexibility. Do not permit tenured positions at the school.
- **Student admission/assignment:** Limit total student population to 400 and assign slots to participating districts based on representation in the total regional student population. Give preference to first-generation college students.
- **Transportation:** Extend the current early college transportation funding model to regional schools and provide maximum flexibility to participating districts to develop creative practices that help address transportation issues.
- **School food services:** Assign responsibility for providing and managing school food services as a condition of hosting the school. Use existing food service funding mechanisms and procedures to address costs.
- **Accountability:** Require, minimally, the use of current academic and professional accountability mechanisms, and assign authority to establish more rigorous accountability models to the School's Board of Directors. Additionally, ensure the Board of Directors and the school staff are subject to the same standards and audit and reporting requirements as other North Carolina LEAs.
- **Site selection:** Establish a network of sister schools of agriscience and biotechnology across the state using the proposals submitted to the Commission as the foundation for development. In the absence of adequate funding and commitment, establish, minimally, a school in the northeastern region of the state, using the Northeast proposal as the basis for start-up.

The recommendations in this report required much thought and discussion. The combination of their backgrounds, experiences and knowledge served the group well, helping them overcome several significant hurdles during the process of developing them. The challenges of executing these recommendations stand to be even more significant. Therefore, as a final suggestion, the Commission recommends that should the General Assembly choose to proceed with development of the North Carolina Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology, it should establish a regional school advisory council that includes the members of this Commission. While the advisory council would have no authority over the school or its Board, such a group could provide advice and continuity of thought to those tasked with establishing the regional school, regardless of where the school is located. The Commission's primary hope is to see the successful development of this school, and to that end they are committed to assisting to the best of their abilities.

Background to this Report

In Fall 2006, planning began for a school of agricultural science and biotechnology in Bertie County, North Carolina. Two years of effort led to the realization that developing the school as a regional entity was the best route to viability. By Summer 2009, an advisory committee convened by North Carolina State University (NCSU), the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center, and the North Carolina New Schools Project (NCNSP) came together to develop a sustainability plan for the future of the Bertie agriscience school. During the same time period, a local advisory committee formed in northeastern North Carolina to provide input to development of the school.

Meanwhile, as part of its extensive state-wide analysis, the Joining Our Businesses and Schools (JOBS) Commission recommended a regional school, located in the Northeast region and focused on agriscience and biotechnology. The JOBS Commission based this recommendation on a visit to the Northeast Economic Development Region and on a prioritization exercise carried out by the North Carolina's Northeast Partnership for Economic Development staff. Additionally, a group of legislators filed Senate Bill 1199, which included a governance structure for a regional school. Various practical questions were raised about how such a regional school would be organized and function. The North Carolina General Assembly (NCGA) then adopted a committee substitute for SB 1199, creating the North Carolina Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission (the Commission) to address these questions and to recommend a location for a regional school. This report is the product of the Commission's deliberations.

The Commission approached development of its recommendations methodically, addressing in turn each of the primary issues identified in the legislation: governance, funding, personnel, student admission and assignment, transportation, and school food services. In the course of their discussion, Commission members also identified the potential for school accountability model (the ABCs of Public Education) to dis-incentivize districts to participate, and so added this item to its list of discussion topics.

The Commission produced this report on a short timeline – roughly 120 days from the time Commissioners were named until the report was turned in to the General Assembly. During that time they met five times, developed recommendations, and wrote, reviewed, finalized and submitted their report. Each meeting generally consumed an entire day. Prior to its first meeting, the commission prioritized each topic area noted above according to the relative degree of difficulty of the issues and chose to address the most difficult issues first. It should be noted also that while much of the discussion was held in the context of an agriscience and biotechnology school, the Commission believes its recommendations are applicable to any regional school irrespective of industry focus. The Commission attempted to draft the language of this report broadly to reflect this belief.

Within this report, the Commission addresses each topic identified above in a separate section to facilitate clarity. Each section begins with a brief discussion of the key issues and then provides the Commission's recommendations. Please note that for each topic, discussion focused primarily on the most important issues and could not address the minutiae inherent in establishing a wholly new enterprise. Additional details remain to be discussed and decided upon, however the Commission believes the governance structure recommended in this report is especially well-suited to manage these details and the Commission recommends it be used to that effect if and when the General Assembly agrees to establish the NC School of Agriscience and Biotechnology.

Intent of Regional Schools

A regional school offers a mechanism to address several key needs and opportunities. First and most importantly, industry-focused regional schools offer an opportunity to educate students in a particular field, in this case the fields of agriscience and biotechnology. These and other industries reflect key economic growth areas across North Carolina. The major goal of this and other future regional schools is to give students the foundational knowledge and skills they need and the industry-specific knowledge that will prepare them for challenging opportunities in the industry. Second, the school can serve as a regional center for teacher development and effectiveness, particularly in the areas of mathematics and science. Third, the school can further solidify the increasing collaboration between the State Board of Education and institutions of higher education (IHEs), providing a model for regional school development across the

state of North Carolina. Finally, development of the school can begin to build stronger links between educational entities and the private sector, helping to establish an effective and on-going link between the preparation of students in North Carolina and the needs of business in specific industries as these industries grow across the state. This symbiotic alignment of education and economic development stands to help develop and support communities across the state, including communities with high economic development needs like many of those found across North Carolina.

Planning Commission Guiding Principles

During its initial meeting on October 12, 2010, the Commission opened with general discussion around expectations for the group and important factors to consider during the course of their work. During this discussion, Commission members espoused a number of “guiding principles” that should focus their search for solutions. These guiding principals include:

- Emphasizing strong academics and high levels of student achievement
- Ensuring strong school district participation/involvement
- Facilitating community engagement and stakeholder input
- Ensuring transparency and open, two-way communication
- Delivering on expectations and promises
- Building on local assets and economy
- Serving students with the greatest needs, and
- Developing strong partnerships with institutions of higher education and with the business community

With these principles in mind, the Commission addressed the issues cited in the enabling legislation and arrived at the recommendations contained herein.

Regional School Governance

Key Governance Issues

Organization and governance of a regional school within North Carolina represents a considerable challenge to success. North Carolina school districts enjoy immense autonomy with respect to most (but not all) strategic and operational activities. Where limitations are in place, state law (GS §115C-105.26) permits local boards to request waivers of state laws, rules, and policies with certain exceptions such as some reporting and personnel requirements. The primary limits on local autonomy include establishment of the NC Standard Course of Study (SCoS) and the interpretation and execution of policies and procedures established by the General Assembly, the executive branch, and the State Board of Education (SBE). Beyond the expectations established at these two levels, local school boards and district superintendents generally are free to implement locally-driven educational programs. The locally-determined policies and procedures may include hiring of school personnel, discipline practices within the district, and grading norms and procedures among other things.

Any regional school model designed for multiple district participation must account for and bridge differences among the practices of several local boards of education and must enable agreement upon one set of policies and procedures for the regional school. Governance structures must facilitate broad stakeholder input, collective decision-making, and conflict resolution. To this end, the Commission recommends the governance structure below for all regional schools established henceforth.

Parent Advisory Council

Consistent with the high value placed on transparency and community participation, the Commission recommends that the local board of education in each participating district be required to nominate two parents whose children attend the regional school to sit on a Parent Advisory Council. To the extent possible, the Parent Advisory Council as a whole should reflect the overall demographic make-up of the region. The Parent Advisory Council should act as a resource for the Board of Directors, available to provide input to the Board any time it considers changes to the educational or logistical operations of the school, but especially in cases where such changes may significantly impact students attending the school and/or their families. Any future regional boards and schools so created should also be established with a similar body designed to ensure parent participation in school decision-making and operations.

Board of Directors

The General Assembly should establish a Board of Directors for the school, which should be subject to the authority of the State Board of Education pursuant to GS §115C-40, and be known and distinguished by a name that signifies the special purpose underlying its establishment, in this instance “North Carolina School of Agriscience and Biotechnology.” To the extent possible, the Board of Directors as a whole should reflect the overall demographic make-up of the region. Any future regional boards and schools so created should be established according to the procedures and specifications outlined here.

Board Membership, Terms and Vacancies

Members of the Board should be selected for their interest in and commitment to the importance of public education, to regional economic development, and to the purposes of the school. Board members should be appointed as follows:

- One sitting Board member from each school district participating in the regional school, elected by the membership of each local board of education, for a term of four years.
- The sitting superintendent of school district in which the school physically resides.
- One additional superintendent representative, elected by the superintendents of the participating districts to an initial term of two years with subsequent elections for a term of four years.
- Three members appointed to represent the business community in the Economic Development Region, elected by the regional Economic Development Commission. At least one of the three should represent the business community in the county in which the school physically resides.

Initial appointments should be for a term of two years with subsequent appointments for a term of four years.

- One sitting member of the Parent Advisory Council, elected by the parents of said Council. Appointments should be for a term of four years, or until the parent's child graduates from or otherwise leaves the school, whichever comes first.
- The Dean of the appropriate College of the partner university (in this case the North Carolina State University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences), or his/her designee.
- The President of the Community College that serves the participating regional school districts, or his/her designee. If multiple Community Colleges serve the participating districts, the Presidents jointly should elect a representative from among their number.

Additionally, with respect to Board membership, the Commission recommends the following:

- The members of the Board should elect a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Board. These two members, along with one additional member elected by the Board, shall constitute the Executive Committee of the Board.
- All Board members should be voting members, except the Chairperson, who shall vote only to break a tie vote among the other members.
- Whenever an appointed member of the Board fails for any unexcused reason to be present at three (3) successive regular meetings of the Board, his or her place as a member of the Board should be deemed vacant and the appointing authority should appoint a new representative.
- Any member of the Board may be removed from office by the appointing authority for misfeasance, malfeasance, or non-feasance in office. All vacancies should be filled by the appointing authority for the remainder of the term of office.

Board Meetings and Procedures

The Board should establish a meeting schedule that includes a minimum of four meetings per year, and may hold special meetings at any time upon the call of the chair or upon petition addressed to the chair by a majority of the members of the Board. All meetings of the Board will be subject to the requirements of Article 33C of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes. The Board should determine its own rules of procedure and be permitted to delegate to such committees it may create as it deems appropriate. Members of the Board should receive such per diem compensation and necessary travel and subsistence expenses while engaged in the discharge of their official duties as is provided by law for members of State boards and commissions.

Powers and Duties of the Board

The Commission recommends generally that the Board of Directors be provided maximum flexibility to operate the school in the best interests of its students, including having access to the flexibility provided via waiver processes to charter schools, early and middle colleges, and traditional schools across the state. More specifically, the Commission also recommends that the following powers and duties be assigned to the Board of Directors of the North Carolina School of Agriscience and Biotechnology and other future regional schools:

- The Board should be empowered to appoint and set the salary of a Principal who is responsible for school operations (including academics) and for executing those duties and powers delegated by the Board.
- The Board should be empowered establish or adopt the standard course of study for the School. This course of study should set forth the subjects to be taught in each grade and the texts and other educational materials on each subject to be used in each grade.
- The Board should be required to design its educational programs to at least meet, and preferably exceed, the student performance standards adopted by the State Board of Education.

- The Board should be required conduct student assessments required by the State Board of Education.
- The Board should provide the opportunity to earn or obtain credit towards degrees from a community college or a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina.
- The Board should develop and adopt an innovative school day and calendar having a minimum of 180 school days and aligned with the school's purpose. The school day and calendar should reflect the norms, expectations, and practices of the relevant industry. For instance, for the School of Agriscience and Biotechnology, the Board should consider implementing a longer school calendar (greater than 180 days) that takes advantage of the natural agricultural cycle as a mechanism for enhancing student learning.
- The Board should be able and capable in law to take, demand, receive, and possess all monies, goods, and chattels that may be given for the use of the School, and to apply the same according to the will of the donors; and by gift, purchase, or devise to receive, possess, enjoy, and retain forever any and all real and personal estate and funds, of whatsoever kind, nature, or quality the same may be, in special trust and confidence that the same, or the profits thereof, shall be applied to and for the use and purpose of establishing and endowing the School, and shall have power to receive donations from any source whatsoever, to be devoted exclusively to the purposes of the maintenance of the School, or according to the terms of the donation.
- The Board also should be able and capable in law to bargain, sell, grant, alien, or dispose of and convey and assure to the purchasers any and all such real and personal estate and funds as it may lawfully acquire when the condition of the grant to it or the will of the deviser does not forbid it; and shall be able and capable in law to sue and be sued in all courts whatsoever; and shall have power to open and receive subscriptions; and in general may do all such things as are usually done by bodies corporate and politic, or such as may be necessary for the promotion of learning and virtue.

Operational and Capital Funding

Key Funding Issues

North Carolina school districts receive annual funding allotments based upon a funding formula that establishes a per pupil amount of funding provided to each district. These monies represent the base state funding for educating children in the school system. Districts also receive federal funds for specific purposes and may choose to provide additional funds from local sources. When a district's membership drops, for instance due to students moving out of a school district, the total state funding allocation to that district also drops. The funding follows the student to the new district, assuming the student remains in North Carolina, and represents a loss to the district the student left. Under the current system and funding structure, students in a regional (multi-district) school would be recognized in membership in the district where the school is physically located. The students' home district would lose funding commensurate with the number of students attending the regional school, multiplied by the state per pupil funding for the district. The host district would gain those funds, in addition to keeping all funds associated with its own students who attend the school. For many districts, and for very small or very high-need districts, a model that completely removes funding for a student attending a regional school would be viewed negatively and would serve to discourage participation in a regional school. Local school districts desire a mechanism by which they can be held harmless, in part or in whole, with respect to funds allotted for ADM.

From a state perspective, allowing a school district to count in ADM a student who attends a regional school located in a neighboring district (which is also counting the student in their ADM) would be to pay twice to educate the same child once, effectively doubling the cost to educate the children attending the regional school.

Overcoming this issue is the primary hurdle in developing a regional school model, however there are others, including determining the level at which to fund the school given the purpose of creating a rigorous, hands-on learning experience for all students, as well as how to provide for administrative costs. For instance, in a regional model, one district must act as a fiscal agent, collecting and administering funds for students from other districts and assuming some or all of the operational and maintenance activities associated with the school. In some places, such as Ohio, the fiscal agent receives a percentage of total school funding to cover administrative costs. If such costs are to be paid, upon what basis should the amount be determined? Should the fiscal agent receive full ADM for its students who attend the regional school? Finally, costs for physical facilities and long-term maintenance must be considered as well, and a funding source must be identified to ensure the facilities remain viable for the purposes of providing a solid educational experience over time.

Solutions to funding issues that satisfy both state- and district-level stakeholders are key to building and maintaining long-term support for a regional school. The Commission recommends the General Assembly take action to address the funding structure as outlined below.

Operational Funds

The Commission believes that achieving the rigorous educational results intended by development of this school will require significant financial commitment. Funding levels must support the full range of resources needed to provide a strong learning experience – high-quality, accomplished faculty and administrators, materials and supplies adequate to enable rich, hands-on experiential learning, and high-quality support staff with the experience and professionalism that allows educators to focus their energy on providing positive student learning outcomes. The Commission believes that achieving this vision is likely to require per pupil expenditures greater than the current per pupil funding provided by the General Assembly, not including capital costs. The Commission engaged in extensive discussion around financing a school at these levels and explored options ranging from full state funding to hybrid funding options including public/private financing and cost-sharing arrangements, and full private funding. Based upon its analysis and discussion the Commission recommends a cost-sharing structure outlined below.

- Per pupil funding levels for regional schools should be targeted at a level equal to 1.5 times the overall average per pupil funding of the participating districts. Using the average funding of the NC Agriscience And Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission

participating districts helps account for regional economic conditions, based upon the assumption that district costs reflect local conditions and the relative cost of educating a child in the area.

- Participating school districts should continue to receive the same formula-based funding for regional school students that they receive for other students in the district.
- From the state funds provided to each participating district, the district should contribute an amount equal to at least 50 per cent of the total formula-based funding provided for each student; the difference should stay with the school district to be used to improve the education provided to the remaining students in the district.
- The remaining funds needed to reach the 1.5 times average threshold specified above should be provided from three sources:
 - Funds provided through private fund-raising organized and conducted by the partner institution of higher education. The campuses of the UNC system across the state have existing infrastructure and personnel designed and used for fund-raising; the Commission believes these partner institutions are willing and able to use these mechanisms to help support the long-term viability of the school(s) with which they are partnered.
 - Funds provided from the proceeds of an endowment, established by the North Carolina General Assembly and managed by the Board of the School, for the express purpose of supporting the regional school. Such an endowment offers the advantages of:
 - Providing an annual and on-going source of operating funds for the school,
 - Providing the ability to grow over time through re-investment of proceeds or through future addition of public and/or private funds (appropriations and/or donations), thereby increasing the annual flow of funds available to the school, and
 - Providing a secure mechanism by which the General Assembly can preserve the principal investment over time and by which it can recover this principal for other purposes should the school ever be closed.¹
 - For a start-up period of 5 years, the remaining amount of money needed to reach the 1.5 times average target should be provided as a direct appropriation from the General Assembly to the School. After the start-up period ends, all school operations should be fully funded through the combination of the previous three funding sources: district contributions drawn from the normal allotment of state funds provided for each student, proceeds of IHE private fund-raising efforts, and endowment proceeds. The target funding level should not be reduced at the conclusion of the 5-year start-up period.
- If students leave the school and return to their home district during the school year, the funds should remain at the regional school.
- The Board of the School should develop and oversee a consistent, repeatable annual process for adjusting funding amounts provided by each district based upon changes in the number of students attending from each district.

While details of this funding design remain to be worked out, the Commission believes this hybrid method addresses the key issues around operational funding for regional schools. It establishes a partnership between the General Assembly, UNC system institutions, and school districts, and represents a significant investment by each, helping ensure a commitment to the goals of the school and the long-term success of this endeavor.

¹ This assumes the endowment is established with the stipulation that principal funds may not be spent, but must remain perpetually in the endowment.

Physical Facilities and Capital Funding

The approach to providing facilities may vary dramatically depending upon the unique circumstances of each participating district. Rather than mandating a detailed approach for facilities, the Commission feels the best tactic is for district partners to work with local community leadership, business organizations, and citizens to develop a plan for providing appropriate facilities for the school. By definition, the host district shall be the district in which the facilities are physically located. The facilities may be provided by the host district or higher education partner, and may include new or re-purposed properties. In some areas of the state, this may allow the use of un-used or abandoned properties, potentially allowing the school to engender a local renaissance, with the school serving as a hub and drawing new businesses to develop in depressed areas. In any case, the facility should meet all the relevant standards and guidelines applied to other educational facilities of the same type.

Long-term capital funds should be provided using the current mechanisms for funding capital expenses in school districts. As this school will be a public school designed to serve the needs of all students and the regional community, the Commission sees no reason to fund the maintenance and upkeep of the regional school differently than any other new, single-district schools.

Personnel

Key Personnel Issues

The Commission envisions the NC School of Agriscience and Biotechnology as a rigorous academic environment where every activity and the underlying decision-making processes focus primarily on the well-being and intellectual development of students at the school. As such, school personnel decisions represent perhaps the most critical decisions to be undertaken by the actors associated with the school. School administrators, faculty, and staff will have daily contact with students and their experience, knowledge, and commitment to learning will set the tone for students in the school. For students to achieve at their potential, their leaders must establish and reinforce a level of rigor and support for student learning that encourages and enables high achievement.

Accomplishing the high quality environment described above requires fair and flexible personnel processes and standards. The Commission engaged in extensive discussion about hiring and about what rules should be applied to personnel processes, including hiring authority and mechanisms, the proper role of traditional personnel procedures such as tenure, and how best to ensure principal and teacher quality.

General Hiring Authority

Hiring authority should be vested in the school's Board of Directors. The Board should be permitted to delegate hiring of faculty and staff to the school's principal, though the Board retains authority to give final approval. Persons hired by the Board or its agent (the principal) should be employees of the Board and not of any other local school administrative unit. The Board should be protected, as other local boards are, through the purchase of Errors and Omissions and Directors and Officers insurance.

A contractual arrangement should be the sole mechanism available to the Board for hiring the principal, faculty, and staff. Contracts should not exceed three years in length. The Commission believes that this time period strikes an appropriate balance between two important aspects of staffing: offering sufficient stability in a position to recruit strong faculty, and ensuring the flexibility needed to make faculty changes when appropriate. Teachers at the school should never be granted career status (tenure); instead, all re-appointments (contract renewals) to administrative and teaching positions should be granted based primarily upon the individual's demonstrated ability to effectively develop the knowledge and skills of the students at the school.

The Board should be allowed to discharge certified and non-certified employees according to terms established in the contract, and all legal provisions in current law related to appropriate grounds for dismissal or demotion of a teacher for cause should be applicable to teachers in the School of Agriscience and Biotechnology as well.

Principal of the School

The school's Principal should be hired by and directly accountable to the Board of Directors. The Commission recommends the following requirements and conditions be applied to the Board when hiring a principal for the NC School of Agriscience and Biotechnology:

- The general provisions specified above with respect to accountability, contracts, and career status should be applied in all cases.
- S/he should be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school, including effective implementation of the academic course of study.
- S/he should be qualified to lead the school according to the current legal and regulatory standards in place for hiring a principal.
- The Board of Directors should be allowed to hire an uncertified individual as principal on a provisional basis according to the terms and conditions currently allowed by the SBE under the standard P-2 Cooperative Innovative Education waiver. This standard waiver for innovative high school programs waives principal certification requirements, but requires non-certified principals to be enrolled in an accredited principal certification program, and to complete the program within three years.

- The Commission recommends the Principal of the North Carolina School of Agriscience and Biotechnology be assigned all the powers and duties normally assigned to principals as specified in GS §115C – 288, and should be responsible for executing all other powers and duties delegated to him/her by the Board.
- A principal with career status in a North Carolina school district who comes to the School of Agriscience and Biotechnology should be permitted to maintain his/her career status in the district s/he leaves.

Teaching Faculty

The school's teaching faculty may be hired directly by the Board of Directors, or by the principal acting on behalf of the Board. The Commission recommends the following requirements and conditions be applied to the Board when hiring teaching faculty for the NC School of Agriscience and Biotechnology:

- The general provisions cited above with respect to accountability, contracts, and career status should be applied in all cases.
- The number of teachers hired should be established according to the current mechanism in place for determining staffing levels in high schools; however, teaching staff minimally should include at least one teacher for each of the core subject areas (English, mathematics, social studies, and science) as well as the faculty needed (based upon the school's curriculum and determined by the Board of Directors) to provide the necessary rigorous instruction in the areas of agriscience and biotechnology.
- Teaching appointments should not be required to be full-time; the Board should have the flexibility to contract with faculty for a level of effort commensurate with instructional and student support needs. For instance, if the need for agriscience/biotechnology-specific instruction and student support is best met through a part-time contract with an industry or academic expert, the Board must have the flexibility to fill the need without creating a full-time position.
- At least 50% of contracted teachers should hold teacher certificates. Under special circumstances (such as contracts with university or community college faculty or knowledgeable and qualified industry personnel) the Board should be permitted to exceed the 50% threshold, if approved by the State Board of Education. Such approval can and should be obtained via the current SBE waiver authority specified in GS §115C-105.26.
- A teacher with career status in a North Carolina school district who joins the faculty of the School of Agriscience and Biotechnology should be permitted to maintain his/her career status in the district s/he leaves.

Student Admissions/Assignment

Key Student Admissions and Assignment Issues

Current state law (GS §115C-366) provides significant guidance regarding student admission and assignment. The Commission finds no need to alter existing admissions and assignment provisions in state law to accommodate a regional school; current practices are sufficient. Commission discussions regarding student admissions and assignment instead focused on a few key aspects of the student population and student selection that are particular to a multi-district model and to successfully achieving high levels of academic rigor and student success. These include:

- school size - how many students to admit,
- district representation within the overall population of admitted students,
- appropriate preferential factors for student admission, and
- minimum requirements for a student to be admitted.

Because of the regional nature of the school, the Commission regards as a foregone conclusion that students will be drawn only from among the student population of the participating districts. Other districts should not be permitted to send students to the school unless formally accepted into the partnership by the Board. With respect to the key issues identified above, the Commission recommends the following:

- The overall student population should be limited to 400 students (100 per grade level); the Board of Directors should be permitted to further limit the student population if it determines it is in the best interests of the school and its students.
- Each participating district should be allotted a student cohort proportionate to its representation in the total student population of the participating districts; the total student population should be based upon each participating district's final Average Daily Membership (ADM) in the preceding school year.
- If a district does not completely fill its allotted cohort, the open slots should be made available to the other participating districts. The funding amount provided to the school by a participating district should be based upon its actual number of students attending the school and not its initially allotted cohort number.
- Student cohort allotments should be recalculated each year for each participating district to determine the number of student slots in the incoming class that should be allotted to each district. These cohort calculations also should be based upon each participating district's final ADM in the immediately prior school year.
- Assignment of students by a participating district should be based upon the following factors, irrespective of cohort size:
 - Preference should be given to students who are/would be the first member of their immediate family to attend college ('first-generation'); the Commission suggests a first-generation target proportion of at least 50% of each district's total cohort size.
 - Students should have demonstrated their ability to achieve academically through a combination of demonstrated performance on end-of-grade/end-of-course tests and/or classroom performance, particularly in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics disciplines.
 - Individual student interest in attending the school.
 - Documented parental support for student attendance at the school.

Transportation

Key Transportation Issues

A regional school model presents several straightforward transportation problems, each related directly to geography. Regardless of the school's site within the state (east vs. west), geography will create challenges for at least a few of the participating school districts – the host district is likely to be the only participant for which the model creates no transportation difficulties. In some locations, the challenges may be significant. For example, in eastern North Carolina, one finds geographically large counties with low population density. This means students in these districts are likely to be widely dispersed, requiring significant travel time and cost just to pick up students, then additional time and expense to deliver them to the school in a neighboring county. In western North Carolina the challenges may be similar, in addition to other geographical challenges such as mountainous terrain and weather.

Past experience in North Carolina serving exceptional children populations is instructive as the situation is similar to that of a regional school – extra student loading time increases labor costs and distant programs increase travel distance and time. Traditionally, EC student transportation has been more expensive than transportation for the general student population.

Even in areas with higher population density where distances between students are small, travel to a neighboring county nonetheless adds time and expense. These factors manifest in tangible ways – higher fuel, maintenance and labor costs – but also may affect school logistics, such as start and end times. They also affect students and their families as well, essentially by lengthening a student's school day.

Out-of-pocket expense is one transportation impact. Another potential impact is the effect of regional school transportation on a district's transportation rating. The North Carolina transportation funding formula, based in part on efficiency, incentivizes school districts to minimize transportation costs by operating fewer buses and minimizing the cost per student transported – districts therefore want full buses traveling the shortest, most efficient routes possible. Low student numbers and large geographic distances work to directly counter this goal.

To address issues surrounding transportation of students to and from the regional school site, the Commission recommends the following:

- Each participating district should be responsible for transportation of its students to the regional school site.
- Each participating district should be permitted to use the current early college transportation funding model whereby extra costs are reimbursed outside the regular funding formula, effectively holding the district harmless with respect to its efficiency rating.
- Both the school and the districts should be encouraged to identify creative ways to address transportation issues, up to and including development of unique school day and/or school week schedules, and each participating district should be permitted maximum flexibility to use transportation dollars to implement creative solutions.

School Food Services

Key Food Service Issues

Students attending the regional school from multiple districts do not leave behind their need for basic sustenance when crossing the county line into the host district. Early and middle colleges (as well as traditional schools) have addressed this problem in a variety of ways over the last several years. For many located on a community college campus, food services are available through the community college or through private sector sources located on or near campus. However, this regional school is likely to be located at a stand-alone facility – a purpose-built school or a research facility – that may not have easy access to food services. Fortunately, providing these services represents a common and easily-solved issue.

All school districts in North Carolina currently provide food services to the schools under their control, so the management and production infrastructure necessary to provide meals to students already exists within school districts. Districts also have the option of contracting for food services and often do this with local vendors. Regardless of how a district chooses to feed students, the mechanisms are in place, including a means for partially funding meals for economically disadvantaged students through the Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) program. As such, the Commission recommends the issue of school food services be resolved as follows:

- The host school district should be responsible for providing and managing school food services as a condition of hosting the school.
- For economically disadvantaged students using the FARMS program, the host district should be permitted to claim, and responsible for claiming, regional school students as part of their program. Current practice is for claims to be made at the point of service; no changes are necessary to this procedure, and the necessary information systems to enable this already are in place.
- Students using the FARMS program may not be claimed in two locations based on federal regulations. The non-host, home school districts of students participating in the FARMS program should be responsible and accountable for ensuring their regional school students are not claimed locally as part of their submissions for reimbursement to the federal Department of Agriculture.
- The Board of Directors of the school should review the financial impacts to the host district of providing food services to regional school students and agree on how much, if any, funding should be provided to the host district by other participating districts to help offset such impacts.

Accountability

Key Accountability Issues

Accountability may be broadly used in the context of a school to refer to any one of several layers. As the term is generally used in North Carolina schools, the accountability program usually refers to the ABCs of Public Education, a program implemented in the mid-1990s to monitor how well schools educate children. Student performance is a large component of this program, but an individual school is accountable based upon the overall performance of its students. The language of accountability may also be applied to teachers, principals, and superintendents as well, using a variety of means and measures, but it is this first application of student performance to school-level accountability that poses a potential problem in a regional model. The Commission considered accountability in the context of both schools and personnel.

As a standard practice, student standardized testing results attach to the school and district where a student is taught. Under normal circumstances this is completely logical and acceptable. However, standard practice engenders concern among school and district personnel with the creation of any new school (regional or otherwise) designed to provide a highly rigorous, high-performance learning environment catering to motivated students. Concern arises not because adults wish to hold back or limit the opportunities of the students in their charge, but because of the potential for what is commonly called a “brain drain.” This occurs when the best and brightest students leave their base school. This impacts the school and the students left behind in a variety of ways. From the standpoint of an accountability system, the exodus may negatively skew a base school’s overall performance rating, making the school appear worse when in fact the quality of teaching and learning at the school has not changed. This is the concern that superintendents, principals and teachers voice when such a program is considered, particularly when tangible outcomes (bonuses, continued employment, etc.) depend upon results.

The Commission believes its vision of this school as a high-performance learning environment is consistent with the General Assembly’s intent when it created the Commission to study the issue. As such, the potential exists for the school to create the concerns described above and to dis-incentivize school districts to participate. To address this issue specifically and to ensure accountability of the regional school, its administrator, and its faculty, the Commission recommends the following:

- Student standardized test scores that figure into ABCs accountability system calculations for schools should be counted at the base school and at the regional school.
- The regional school principal and faculty should be evaluated according to the same standards and using the same instruments as every other principal and teacher in North Carolina, at a minimum.
- The Board of Directors should be permitted the flexibility to consider whether additional evaluation criteria should be applied to the principal and teachers based upon the high expectations for faculty, staff and student performance at the school, and to apply such criteria as they determine are appropriate.

Financial Accountability

One final area of accountability involves school financial operations. It is the recommendation of the Commission that the Board of Directors and the school staff be subject to the same standards and audit and reporting requirements as other North Carolina LEAs.

Site Selection

The Commission Process

Senate Bill 1199 specifies that the Commission should consider potential sites for the placement of a regional school of agriscience and biotechnology. The Commission, consistent with its guiding principal of community engagement, determined that any approach to this must ensure a desire on the part of an identified community to host the school. Given the need to look across the state at potential sites and the dramatically short time period in which to do so, the Commission determined the best approach would be to release a non-binding Request for Information to superintendents, to local boards of education, and to each of the seven regional economic development partnerships.

The Request for Information

The Request for Information (RFI) was designed to gauge regional interest in and support for participating in a multi-district school model and to provide information that will help the Commission rank potential sites for such a school. Through this formal, written RFI, the Commission informed interested parties of the uncertainty surrounding final governance and funding mechanisms, as well as final site selection, all of which would ultimately be determined through legislative action, and that the regional school will have to operate within those pre-defined parameters. The Commission enumerated its guiding principles and its primary ranking criteria, including local need, the availability of production assets, and alignment with regionally-defined economic development priorities. Respondents were given one month to develop a 5-page response that outlined specific information that must be provided, including:

- A. Identify the members of the partnership/consortium and provide clear evidence of commitment by the partners. Partnerships should include school districts and may also include other institutions of higher education, businesses, and/or non-profit organizations.
- B. Describe the regional economy, citing the biotech/agricultural assets in your region. Describe the economic priority of agriscience and biotechnology per the priorities of the JOBS Commission report/findings.
- C. Provide or estimate the level of student interest in agriscience and biotechnology, and how the partnership expects placement of the regional school in its region to impact student achievement, graduation rates, and under-represented populations (first-generation college students, minorities, and females). If the partnership has supporting data, please indicate the data source(s).
- D. Describe your connectivity to the agriculture and biotechnology resources of the North Carolina Research Campus and North Carolina State University.
- E. The partnership should identify proposed physical facilities for the regional school.

Section B above was intended to establish information needed to evaluate each proposal according to the primary ranking criteria; the other sections were included to ensure the Commission received information about several other guiding principles including community engagement, stakeholder input, and partnerships with business and higher education.

The Response Evaluation Process

The Commission intended from the beginning to provide to the General Assembly all RFI response information in its entirety so as to fulfill its desire to create awareness about the level of interest in the regional school. To ensure it met the letter of its legislated responsibility, Commission members, upon the advice and agreement of attorneys from the Department of Public Instruction and the Office of the Attorney General, decided to use a ranking procedure whereby each member reviewed each submission, engaged in discussion about each submission together, and then individually ranked each proposal relative to the others. Commission staff then added the combined rankings of each proposal to determine the final overall ranking. Under this procedure, the proposal with the lowest overall “score” is ranked highest, reflecting the propensity of the proposal to be ranked more highly than the others, on balance, across all members of the commission. This method provided the best available approach considering the limitations of the RFI process. Specifically, the limitations of time and uncertainty around final

Commission recommendations restricted the quality of information that could be shared with teams developing their proposals and impacted the overall quality of the RFI process.

The Responses, Site Rankings, and a Recommendation from the Commission

Four groups representing thirteen school districts provided RFI responses. Three responses came from the west and one from the east. Commission members read each response in detail and met via conference call for discussion and to complete the ranking process. Discussion focused around the primary criteria mentioned above – local need, availability of production assets, and alignment with regional priorities – but also considered the Commission’s other guiding principles. Members discussed the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal, though they generally felt any of the four proposed options could be successful given the proper planning and support. Upon completing their discussion, individual rankings were combined and the final ranking specified. The table below reflects the breakdown of the responses and the Commission’s final ranking for each.

Response ID	Participating Districts	Final Ranking
Northeast	Washington County Schools, Hyde County Schools, Edenton-Chowan Public Schools, Tyrrell County Schools	1
Southwest	Cabarrus County Schools, Kannapolis City Schools	2
Northwest	Iredell-Statesville Schools, Wilkes County Schools, Alexander County Schools	3
Western	Asheville City Schools, Buncombe County Schools, Madison County Schools, Transylvania County Schools	4

When the General Assembly authorizes the North Carolina School of Agriscience and Biotechnology, the Commission recommends use of the rankings above to serve as the basis for placing the school. However, during the course of the discussion and ranking process, many members reflected on the power and value of having a network of sister schools in North Carolina. Such a network – geographically dispersed across the state, anchored with North Carolina’s top flight research institutions, and supporting the broad array of agriscience and biotechnology fields – would make a powerful statement to industry that North Carolina is the best place to do business. This network could offer the necessary knowledge skills and abilities to transform North Carolina into an international hub for agriscience and biotechnology. As such, the Commission further recommends the General Assembly use the proposals received during this process along with its other recommendations to develop a network of sister schools across North Carolina.

Conclusion

The background information provided at the beginning of this report cited several goals of this analysis:

- To provide a rigorous, high-quality learning opportunity for students interested in a particular field, in this case the fields of agriscience and biotechnology.
- To serve as a regional center for teacher development and effectiveness, particularly in the areas of mathematics and science.
- To solidify the increasing collaboration between the State Board of Education and institutions of higher education (IHEs), providing a model for regional school development across the state of North Carolina.
- To build stronger links between educational entities and the private sector and, consistent with JOBS Commission goals, to establish a link between the student preparation and business needs.

Many challenges stand in the way of achieving these goals. Many of the key challenges are outlined in this report; others are not, but remain challenges nonetheless. The Commission's overriding intent has been to develop recommendations for addressing these key obstacles and to offer a structure that will allow a regional school to function effectively and survive until it can thrive. The Commission recognizes it has not addressed every potential problem and that future issues will arise that simply may not be foreseen based upon what is now known. However, the members of the Commission believe the recommendations herein offer a structure that emphasizes strong academics, strong partnerships and strong participation. This structure allows the stakeholder community to work together to address known issues, identify future needs, and accommodate change in a way that ensures the school can reach a point in time when the school, its students and its community can thrive together.

The recommendations in this report required much thought and discussion. The combination of their backgrounds, experiences and knowledge served the group well, helping them overcome several significant hurdles during the process of developing them. The challenges of executing these recommendations stand to be even more significant. Therefore, as a final suggestion, the Commission recommends that should the General Assembly choose to proceed with development of the North Carolina Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology, it should establish a regional school advisory council that includes the members of this Commission. While the advisory council would have no authority over the school or its Board, such a group could provide advice and continuity of thought to those tasked with establishing the regional school, regardless of where the school is located. The Commission's primary hope is to see the successful development of this school, and to that end they are committed to assisting to the best of their abilities.

Appendix A

Request for Information

Released November 18, 2010

Request for Information
from organizations interested in hosting a
Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology

During the 2009 legislative session, the North Carolina General Assembly established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission (“the Commission”), charging it with developing and planning a regional school of agriscience and biotechnology to open in the 2011-2012 school year. Specifically, the Commission must recommend to the NC General Assembly by January 1, 2011 a governance structure and funding model options as well as recommendations regarding several additional operational details. (Please see enabling legislation, Attachment A.)

This Request for Information (RFI) is intended to gauge regional interest and support for participating in a multi-district school model and to provide information that will help the Commission identify and rank potential sites for such a school. Parties interested in providing a site for and operating a regional (multi-district) school of agriscience and biotechnology in their region should expect final governance and funding mechanisms, as well as final site selection (region), to be defined by the General Assembly, and that the regional school will have to operate within those pre-defined parameters. Interested parties should recognize that the Commission’s recommendations are only recommendations and are not binding on the General Assembly. The final governance structure and funding model may not match the Commission’s recommendations (Please see the DRAFT governance and funding recommendations attached to this RFI, Attachment B).

During its initial meeting, the Commission identified a series of guiding principles around which the school should be developed and which the Commission believes are critical to success for a regional school. These guiding principles, listed below, reflect Commission thinking about the appropriate culture and purpose of a regional school designed to provide rigorous academic instruction and to contribute positively to the communities and the economy of the region it serves.

Guiding principles for regional schools should embrace and include:

- Governance representative of school systems in the partnership
- Serving students and region where there is the most need
- Community engagement
- Stakeholder Input
- Transparency
- Open Communication
- Delivery on expectations/promises
- Building on local assets and the local economy
- Strong partnerships with institutions of higher education
- Strong involvement with regional business partners

In the interest of serving these guiding principles, the Commission invites interested organizations to partner in developing a high-level plan for hosting the first North Carolina Regional School, focused on agriscience and biotechnology. The Commission will use the information provided to recommend a site and partnership for this initial school, which the Commission hopes will serve as a model for additional schools around the state in the future.

Partnerships interested in opening/hosting the school should provide the following information:

- A. Identify the members of the partnership/consortium and provide clear evidence of commitment by the partners. Partnerships should include school districts and may also include other institutions of higher education, businesses, and/or non-profit organizations.
- B. Describe the regional economy, citing the biotech/agricultural assets in your region. Describe the economic priority of agriscience and biotechnology per the priorities of the JOBS Commission report/findings.
- C. Provide or estimate the level of student interest in agriscience and biotechnology, and how the partnership expects placement of the regional school in its region to impact student achievement, graduation rates, and under-represented populations (first-generation college students, minorities, and females). If the partnership has supporting data, please indicate the data source(s).
- D. Describe your connectivity to the agriculture and biotechnology resources of the North Carolina Research Campus and North Carolina State University.
- E. The partnership should identify proposed physical facilities for the regional school.

Information received from each partnership will be reviewed and ranked by the Commission prior to completion of its recommendations to the General Assembly. Primary ranking criteria reflect several Commission guiding principles and include local needs, availability of production assets to support the school, and alignment with regionally-defined economic development priorities. Alignment with other Commission-defined guiding principles will be considered as secondary criteria.

- **Responses to this RFI are due to the Commission by 12 PM (noon) December 17, 2010. Responses submitted after this date and time will not be reviewed.**
- **Responses are required for each item (A through E) above. Limit total response length to no more than 5 pages (double-spaced, 12 point font, 1-inch margins).**
- **Responses MUST be signed by both board of education chairpersons and superintendents of all participating districts. Responses without all required signatures will not be reviewed.**
- Letters of support/commitment from partners and community stakeholders may be included as an appendix and do not count against the 5-page limit, however such letters should **NOT** be used to provide the responses to the required items above.
- Responses may be sent electronically via email to Rob Hines, NCDPI Director of LEA Projects, at rhines@dpi.state.nc.us. Please include "Biotech RFI Response" in the subject line and attach your response.

Please direct questions to Rob Hines at 919.807.3244 or via email at the address noted above.

PART XXIX. AGRISCIENCE AND BIOTECHNOLOGY REGIONAL SCHOOL PLANNING COMMISSION (S.B. 1199)

SECTION 29.1. There is established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission. The purpose of the Commission shall be to develop and plan a regional school of agriscience and biotechnology to open in the 2011-2012 school year. The Commission shall be located administratively in the Department of Public Instruction but shall exercise its powers and duties independently of the Department of Public Instruction. The Department of Public Instruction shall provide for the administrative costs of the Commission and shall provide staff to the Commission.

SECTION 29.2. The Commission shall consist of up to nine members appointed by the chair of the State Board of Education. Appointments shall be made no later than September 1, 2010.

SECTION 29.3. The Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission shall develop a plan for a regional school of agriscience and biotechnology to open in the 2011-2012 school year and shall ensure that the model is replicable, sustainable, and scaleable. In the development of its plan, the Commission shall:

- (1) Consider the regional school's governance, funding for operational and capital needs, personnel, admissions and assignment of students, transportation, school food services, and other issues the Commission deems relevant.
- (2) Solicit proposals from interested regions seeking to host the school and identify a location for the regional school.
- (3) Identify potential business partners for the regional school.
- (4) Consult with North Carolina State University and the NC Research Campus and establish connections between those institutions and the regional school.

SECTION 29.4. The Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission shall report on its recommended plan to the State Board of Education, the Joint Legislative Joining Our Businesses and Schools (JOBS) Study Commission, and the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by January 1, 2011.

Proposed high-level governance and funding structure for the North Carolina School of Agriscience and Biotechnology*

Governance

The General Assembly should establish a Board of Directors for the school. The Commission will recommend board members be appointed as follows:

- One sitting member from the Board of each participating school district, appointed for a term of four years.
 - Three members representing the business community in the Economic Development Region, appointed by the regional Economic Development Commission. At least one of these representatives must be from the county in which the school is located. Initial appointments for a term of two years with subsequent appointments for a term of four years.
 - One member elected by the membership of a Parent Advisory Council. The local board of education in each participating district shall nominate two parents with children attending the regional school to sit on the Parent Advisory Council. Initial appointments for a term of two years with subsequent appointments for a term of four years, or until the parent's child graduates from the school, whichever comes first.
 - The sitting superintendent of the school district in which the school is located.
 - One sitting superintendent selected by the superintendents of the other participating districts.
 - The Dean of the North Carolina State University College of Agriculture, or his/her designee.
 - The President of the Community College found within the geographic footprint of the regional school; if multiple Community Colleges are within this geographic footprint, the Presidents jointly should select a representative from among their number.
-
- The Board should meet at least four times a year.
 - The Board should determine its own rules of procedure and be permitted to delegate to such committees it may create as it deems appropriate.
 - The Board should be empowered to appoint and set the salary of a Principal who exercises those duties and powers delegated by the Board.
 - The Board should be empowered to establish or adopt the standard course of study for the School.
 - The Board should be required to design its programs to at least meet the student performance standards adopted by the State Board of Education and any additional student performance standards commensurate with providing a rigorous course of study for students bound for an institution of higher education.
 - The Board should conduct student assessments required by the State Board of Education.
 - The Board should provide the opportunity to earn or obtain credit towards degrees from a community college or a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina.
 - The Board should adopt an innovative school calendar that exceeds 180 days and enables students to take advantage of internships, projects, or other hands-on learning experiences related to agriculture and biotechnology.

Funding

Several potential funding option recommendations are under consideration, including:

- Full state funding that would at least partially preserve LEA ADM funds.
- A combination of state and private funding that would at least partially preserve LEA ADM funds.
- A cost-sharing arrangement that would re-direct part of LEA ADM funding to the regional school and remaining funding needs would be met using other state and/or private sources.

* Please note: This information is in DRAFT form and is subject to change. The General Assembly may or may not choose to implement Commission recommendations.

Appendix B

Northeast Response to the Request for Information



WASHINGTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

802 Washington Street • Plymouth, North Carolina 27962
Phone: 252.793.5171 Fax: 252.793.5062

John D. Farrelly
Superintendent

December 17, 2010

Mr. Hines

Enclosed are the following documents:

1. The Northeast Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology ***request for information*** application. There are 4 RFI's signed by the Board Chairs and Superintendents from the following counties: Washington, Edenton Chowan, Tyrrell and Hyde Counties.
2. **Attachment A** includes 33 letters of support from the partners in our application.

Thank you for your consideration.

John D. Farrelly

John D. Farrelly
Superintendent
Washington County Schools

Northeast Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology

The Northeast Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology is a 9-12 early college high school developed as a regional multi-district school model. The proposed school will serve as a dynamic economic and educational transformation model for a region that has suffered drastic economic decline, loss of jobs, declining population and low academic achievement since the early 1990s. The Northeast proposal embraces a series of guiding principles around which the school should be developed and which the partners believe are critical to success for a regional school in Northeast North Carolina. These guiding principles reflect the culture of the region. The primary focus of the Northeast proposal is to provide rigorous academic instruction and to contribute positively to the communities and the economy of the region it serves. The school will be housed at the Vernon G. James Research Center and Tidewater Research Station in Roper, NC. The site is highly accessible to potential regional students since it is in the geographic center of Northeast North Carolina. The Northeast Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology will graduate students who are globally competitive, responsible citizens and lifelong learners prepared for success in higher education or in a career of choice. The school will become a critical resource in the region and the state for developing students who are equipped with the skills, knowledge, expertise and content most highly valued by future employers and higher education in biotechnology and agriscience.

The committed partnerships are deep and diversified as evidenced by the resolutions of support in Appendix A. Boards of Education have committed to sending students to the Northeast Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology in 2011: Edenton-Chowan, Hyde, Tyrrell and Washington. Five additional school systems have also expressed their full support of the initiative: Bertie, Perquimans, Beaufort, Martin, and Hertford. This partnership extends well beyond local school systems to include: Avoca, Inc (the world's

premier botanical extraction company); North Carolina's Northeast Commission (which promotes economic development and travel and tourism for the sixteen northeastern North Carolina Counties); The Vernon G. James Research Center and Tidewater Research Station; NC State University; The North Carolina Department of Agriculture; a number of local County Board of Commissioners and other governmental groups. The partners embrace and commit to the following model: A governance representative of school systems in the partnership; serving students in the region; community engagement; stakeholder input; transparency; open communication; delivery on expectations/promises; building on local assets and the local economy; strong partnerships with institutions of higher education and strong involvement with regional business partners. The Northeast partners commit to providing an impact on all school systems in the Northeast in a positive way by sharing resources and professional development opportunities where and when applicable. In addition, the JOBS Commission recommendations have been recognized and considered through our partnership, planning and commitments.

Agriculture has long been an economic mainstay of northeastern North Carolina and undoubtedly will be an important part of this region's economy well into the future. Farmers will continue to grow crops such as corn, cotton, tobacco and soybeans. However, with relatively modest changes, we believe agriculture in Northeastern North Carolina can be transformed and become an economic engine that produces related jobs and raises the standard of living throughout this region. Efforts are underway to develop land adjacent to the Vernon James Center as a commercialization campus complete with greenhouses available for lease to companies investing in new crops. Funding for additional faculty at the Vernon James Center is also being pursued. In addition, another important consideration is a pilot extraction facility. This facility will be a crucial tool to be used by private sector biotechnology companies in determining whether the production of various biobased products extracted from plants is commercially feasible. There are only three other similar facilities available in North America. Of the \$2.1 million needed for this project, \$1.65 has been raised to date. An

Agriscience/Biotechnology high school will be a training ground for future agricultural, biotech, food-based technicians and a training resource for agriscience teachers. The school will add a focal point to the multi-faceted economic development approach of building the assets of the entire region toward becoming a center for agricultural biotechnology. At Vernon James, a company will be able to tap into agricultural expertise that will help determine the best way to produce the raw material from which a biobased, value-added product will be extracted. At the nearby pilot extraction facility, they will also be able to test extraction methods to determine whether production is commercially viable. We envision the Vernon James Center and North Carolina's Northeast region becoming a magnet for entrepreneurial companies that wish to produce biobased, value-added products. In the biobased economy, it makes good economic sense to locate processing facilities near the agricultural lands that serve as the source for raw materials. The emergence of a biobased economy will bring many new jobs to Northeastern North Carolina.

We, the partners of the Northeast, believe that the developed proposal reflects local needs, availability of production assets to support the school and alignment with regionally-defined economic development priorities. Key innovations for students in the Northeast Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology will emerge following the elements and constructs of NC STEM's design principles. North Carolina is the leader of innovation in STEM research and engineering for the world. Students who attend the Northeast Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology will have access to unique 21st Century programs under the leadership of doctoral level professors from NCSU, who will facilitate advanced level courses and experiences in Agricultural & Extension Education, Animal Science, Crop Science, Entomology, Horticultural Science, Soil Science, Soil Fertility, Tillage and Soil Management. The school will provide access to a rigorous technology driven curriculum while affording opportunities to all students, particularly those from minority and low-income communities. All students meeting predefined entrance criteria by the governance board will be considered with a priority focus on

first generation students. Educational innovation and student engagement will accelerate student academic performance, prepare students for post secondary success and dramatically increase student proficiency and graduation rates. This program will graduate students who are college-ready and globally competitive. The concentrated program at the regional school would contribute to overall achievement and graduation rates by focusing on student interest and career goals. Over 80% of CTE students statewide that take 4 or more CTE courses in high school graduate with their cohort graduating class. This compares to just over 30% who graduate within 4 years without a CTE concentration. There are currently over 300 students in the four counties who are in agriculture programs at their current high schools.

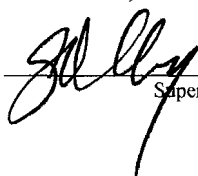
The school facility is student and classroom ready for immediate occupancy at the Vernon G. James Research Center and Tidewater Research Station. This facility is highly accessible to potential regional students since it is in the geographic center of Northeast North Carolina. Since the facilities are jointly administered by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and North Carolina State University, local governmental or educational agencies will not be responsible for any potential capital outlay projects.

Three of the four school systems committing to this initiative are low wealth school districts. Given the state of the local economies, alarming poverty and unemployment rates as well as devastating state, federal and local budget cuts; an alternative funding model is necessary to fund the Northeast Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology. The four school systems commit to providing half (50%) of the state allotted ADM funds for each student attending said school from the home school district to support associated costs. All other funding sources for administrative/operational costs will be provided through state resources funded by the General Assembly. This is the only funding formula that the economically distressed identified counties

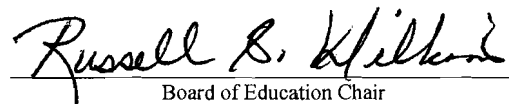
in the Northeast proposal find acceptable and commit to. The partners intend to apply for funding as an early college high school through the new schools project. LEA's will have the individual responsibility to decide whether to provide transportation. Washington County Schools will strive to work collaboratively with LEA's in providing potential transportation assistance from mutually agreed destinations across county lines.

The Northeast partners feel that the leadership provided by community stakeholders is critical to the success of the school. The partners will establish a Board of Directors for the school and agree to follow the predetermined design of identified board members. The Board will determine its own rules of procedure and be permitted to delegate to such committees it may create as it deems appropriate. The board will establish or adopt the NC standard course of study. The Board will design its programs and assessments to at least meet the student performance standards adopted by the State Board of Education and any additional student standards commensurate with providing a rigorous course of study for students bound for an institution of higher education. The Board will provide the opportunity to earn or obtain credit towards degrees from a community college or a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina. The Board will adopt an innovative school calendar that strives to exceed 180 days. The host county, Washington, agrees to assume the responsibility of being fiscal agent.

Through collaborative partnerships with biotechnology and agriscience-related businesses, local school districts, higher education and an engaging high school curriculum, The Northeast School for Biotechnology and Agriculture will provide an innovative 21st century education, while uplifting the economy of Northeastern North Carolina.



Superintendent of Schools



Board of Education Chair

Northeast Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology

The Northeast Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology is a 9-12 early college high school developed as a regional multi-district school model. The proposed school will serve as a dynamic economic and educational transformation model for a region that has suffered drastic economic decline, loss of jobs, declining population and low academic achievement since the early 1990s. The Northeast proposal embraces a series of guiding principles around which the school should be developed and which the partners believe are critical to success for a regional school in Northeast North Carolina. These guiding principles reflect the culture of the region. The primary focus of the Northeast proposal is to provide rigorous academic instruction and to contribute positively to the communities and the economy of the region it serves. The school will be housed at the Vernon G. James Research Center and Tidewater Research Station in Roper, NC. The site is highly accessible to potential regional students since it is in the geographic center of Northeast North Carolina. The Northeast Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology will graduate students who are globally competitive, responsible citizens and lifelong learners prepared for success in higher education or in a career of choice. The school will become a critical resource in the region and the state for developing students who are equipped with the skills, knowledge, expertise and content most highly valued by future employers and higher education in biotechnology and agriscience.

The committed partnerships are deep and diversified as evidenced by the resolutions of support in Appendix A. Boards of Education have committed to sending students to the Northeast Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology in 2011: Edenton-Chowan, Hyde, Tyrrell and Washington. Five additional school systems have also expressed their full support of the initiative: Bertie, Perquimans, Beaufort, Martin, and Hertford. This partnership extends well beyond local school systems to include: Avoca, Inc (the world's

premier botanical extraction company); North Carolina's Northeast Commission (which promotes economic development and travel and tourism for the sixteen northeastern North Carolina Counties); The Vernon G. James Research Center and Tidewater Research Station; NC State University; The North Carolina Department of Agriculture; a number of local County Board of Commissioners and other governmental groups. The partners embrace and commit to the following model: A governance representative of school systems in the partnership; serving students in the region; community engagement; stakeholder input; transparency; open communication; delivery on expectations/promises; building on local assets and the local economy; strong partnerships with institutions of higher education and strong involvement with regional business partners. The Northeast partners commit to providing an impact on all school systems in the Northeast in a positive way by sharing resources and professional development opportunities where and when applicable. In addition, the JOBS Commission recommendations have been recognized and considered through our partnership, planning and commitments.

Agriculture has long been an economic mainstay of northeastern North Carolina and undoubtedly will be an important part of this region's economy well into the future.

Farmers will continue to grow crops such as corn, cotton, tobacco and soybeans. However, with relatively modest changes, we believe agriculture in Northeastern North Carolina can be transformed and become an economic engine that produces related jobs and raises the standard of living throughout this region. Efforts are underway to develop land adjacent to the Vernon James Center as a commercialization campus complete with greenhouses available for lease to companies investing in new crops. Funding for additional faculty at the Vernon James Center is also being pursued. In addition, another important consideration is a pilot extraction facility. This facility will be a crucial tool to be used by private sector biotechnology companies in determining whether the production of various biobased products extracted from plants is commercially feasible. There are only three other similar facilities available in North America. Of the \$2.1 million needed for this project, \$1.65 has been raised to date. An

Agriscience/Biotechnology high school will be a training ground for future agricultural, biotech, food-based technicians and a training resource for agriscience teachers. The school will add a focal point to the multi-faceted economic development approach of building the assets of the entire region toward becoming a center for agricultural biotechnology. At Vernon James, a company will be able to tap into agricultural expertise that will help determine the best way to produce the raw material from which a biobased, value-added product will be extracted. At the nearby pilot extraction facility, they will also be able to test extraction methods to determine whether production is commercially viable. We envision the Vernon James Center and North Carolina's Northeast region becoming a magnet for entrepreneurial companies that wish to produce biobased, value-added products. In the biobased economy, it makes good economic sense to locate processing facilities near the agricultural lands that serve as the source for raw materials. The emergence of a biobased economy will bring many new jobs to Northeastern North Carolina.

We, the partners of the Northeast, believe that the developed proposal reflects local needs, availability of production assets to support the school and alignment with regionally-defined economic development priorities. Key innovations for students in the Northeast Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology will emerge following the elements and constructs of NC STEM's design principles. North Carolina is the leader of innovation in STEM research and engineering for the world. Students who attend the Northeast Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology will have access to unique 21st Century programs under the leadership of doctoral level professors from NCSU, who will facilitate advanced level courses and experiences in Agricultural & Extension Education, Animal Science, Crop Science, Entomology, Horticultural Science, Soil Science, Soil Fertility, Tillage and Soil Management. The school will provide access to a rigorous technology driven curriculum while affording opportunities to all students, particularly those from minority and low-income communities. All students meeting predefined entrance criteria by the governance board will be considered with a priority focus on

first generation students. Educational innovation and student engagement will accelerate student academic performance, prepare students for post secondary success and dramatically increase student proficiency and graduation rates. This program will graduate students who are college-ready and globally competitive. The concentrated program at the regional school would contribute to overall achievement and graduation rates by focusing on student interest and career goals. Over 80% of CTE students statewide that take 4 or more CTE courses in high school graduate with their cohort graduating class. This compares to just over 30% who graduate within 4 years without a CTE concentration. There are currently over 300 students in the four counties who are in agriculture programs at their current high schools.

The school facility is student and classroom ready for immediate occupancy at the Vernon G. James Research Center and Tidewater Research Station. This facility is highly accessible to potential regional students since it is in the geographic center of Northeast North Carolina. Since the facilities are jointly administered by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and North Carolina State University, local governmental or educational agencies will not be responsible for any potential capital outlay projects.

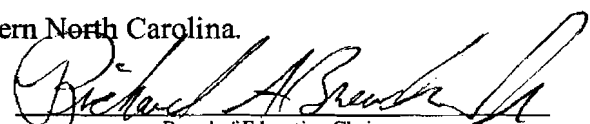
Three of the four school systems committing to this initiative are low wealth school districts. Given the state of the local economies, alarming poverty and unemployment rates as well as devastating state, federal and local budget cuts; an alternative funding model is necessary to fund the Northeast Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology. The four school systems commit to providing half (50%) of the state allotted ADM funds for each student attending said school from the home school district to support associated costs. All other funding sources for administrative/operational costs will be provided through state resources funded by the General Assembly. This is the only funding formula that the economically distressed identified counties

in the Northeast proposal find acceptable and commit to. The partners intend to apply for funding as an early college high school through the new schools project. LEA's will have the individual responsibility to decide whether to provide transportation. Washington County Schools will strive to work collaboratively with LEA's in providing potential transportation assistance from mutually agreed destinations across county lines.

The Northeast partners feel that the leadership provided by community stakeholders is critical to the success of the school. The partners will establish a Board of Directors for the school and agree to follow the predetermined design of identified board members. The Board will determine its own rules of procedure and be permitted to delegate to such committees it may create as it deems appropriate. The board will establish or adopt the NC standard course of study. The Board will design its programs and assessments to at least meet the student performance standards adopted by the State Board of Education and any additional student standards commensurate with providing a rigorous course of study for students bound for an institution of higher education. The Board will provide the opportunity to earn or obtain credit towards degrees from a community college or a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina. The Board will adopt an innovative school calendar that strives to exceed 180 days. The host county, Washington, agrees to assume the responsibility of being fiscal agent.

Through collaborative partnerships with biotechnology and agriscience-related businesses, local school districts, higher education and an engaging high school curriculum, The Northeast School for Biotechnology and Agriculture will provide an innovative 21st century education, while uplifting the economy of Northeastern North Carolina.


Superintendent of Schools


Board of Education Chair

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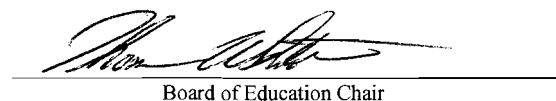
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Three of the four school systems committing to this initiative are low wealth school districts. Given the state of the local economies, alarming poverty and unemployment rates as well as devastating state, federal and local budget cuts; an alternative funding model is necessary to fund the Northeast Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology. The four school systems commit to providing half (50%) of the state allotted ADM funds for each student attending said school from the home school district to support associated costs. All other funding sources for administrative/operational costs will be provided through state resources funded by the General Assembly. This is the only funding formula that the economically distressed identified counties

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Superintendent of Schools


Board of Education Chair

Superintendent
Dr. Michael Dunsmore



Assistant Superintendent
Pearl J. Sulton

Board of Education
Robin Dunbar, *Chairman*
Beverly Swain, *Vice-Chairman*
Lloyd Armstrong
Vi Crowder
Janie Spencer

Tyrrell County Public Schools

P.O. Box 328 - Columbia, N.C. 27925

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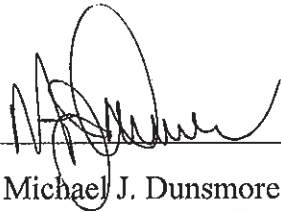
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The Northeast partners feel that the leadership provided by community stakeholders is critical to the success of the school. The partners will establish a Board of Directors for the school and agree to follow the predetermined design of identified board members. The Board will determine its own rules of procedure and be permitted to delegate to such committees it may create as it deems appropriate. The board will establish or adopt the NC standard course of study. The Board will design its programs and assessments to at least meet the student performance standards adopted by the State Board of Education and any additional student standards commensurate with providing a rigorous course of study for students bound for an institution of higher education. The Board will provide the opportunity to earn or obtain credit towards degrees from a community college or a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina. The Board will adopt an innovative school calendar that strives to exceed

180days. The host county, Washington, agrees to assume the responsibility of being fiscal agent.

Through collaborative partnerships with biotechnology and agriscience-related businesses, local school districts, higher education and an engaging high school curriculum, The Northeast School for Biotechnology and Agriculture will provide an innovative 21st century education, while uplifting the economy of Northeastern North Carolina.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael J. Dunsmore", written over a horizontal line.

Michael J. Dunsmore, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robin Dunbar", written over a horizontal line.

Mrs. Robin Dunbar
Board of Education - Chair

Superintendent
Dr. Michael Dunsmore

Assistant Superintendent
Pearl J. Sutton



Board of Education
Robin Dunbar, *Chairman*
Beverly Swain, *Vice- Chair*
Lloyd Armstrong
Vi Crowder
Janie Spencer

Tyrrell County Public Schools

P. O. Box 328 • Columbia, NC 27925

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS NC Senate Bill 1199 established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission to develop a plan for a regional school and ensure that the model is replicable, sustainable, scalable, and

WHEREAS the economy of Washington County, NC and the surrounding area is driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture, and

WHEREAS many students in the local schools live in rural areas or on farms where they learn the value of work, the multi-craftsmanship of entrepreneurship, and the skill of building networking support combined with independence, and

WHEREAS an ag science high school in Washington County would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area, including Tyrrell County Schools, and

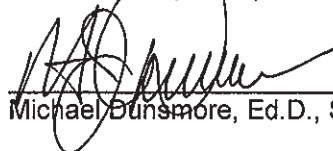
WHEREAS the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Tyrrell County Schools supports the concept of a regional ag high school located in Washington County, NC at the site of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center.

Adopted this 6th day of December, 2010.

Attest:


Robin Dunbar, Chair, Board of Education


Michael Dunsmore, Ed.D., Superintendent

ATTACHMENT

A

NC Senate Bill 1199
Agriscience Biotechnology Regional School
Letters of Support

Avoca, Inc.
Beaufort County Board of Education
Beaufort County Chamber of Commerce
Beaufort County Community College
Bertie County Board of Commissioners
Bertie County Board of Education
BioNetwork Bioprocessing Center
Blackland Farm Managers Association (BFMA)
Chowan County Board of Commissioners
Creswell Town Board of Commissioners
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at NC State University
College of the Albemarle
Edenton-Chowan Board of Education
Greenville City Council
Hertford County Board of Education
Hyde County Board of Commissioners
Hyde County Board of Education
Martin Community College
Martin County Board of Commissioners
Martin County Board of Education
NC Potato Association, Inc.
North Carolina Biotechnology Center
North Carolina's Northeast Commission
North Carolina's Northeast Committee of 1000
North Carolina's Northeast Economic Developers (NEED)
Perquimans County Board of Education
Perquimans County Board of Commissioners
Roanoke River Mayors Association
Town of Edenton
Town of Hamilton
Town Board of Oak City
Town of Williamston
Washington County Board of Commissioners



December 10, 2010

Dr. John Farrelly
Superintendent
Washington County Schools
802 Washington St.
Plymouth, NC 27962

Dear Dr. Farrelly:

On behalf of Avoca, Inc., I wish to express support for the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School to be located at the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center in Washington County.

Avoca is one of North Carolina's leading bioprocessing companies. We are extremely supportive of any initiative that supports this industry. We foresee several advantages to having the school located in Northeastern North Carolina. As agriculture becomes more sophisticated the need for better educated growers is imperative. Also as companies like ours develop and locate to the area, there will be an urgent need for well-educated and trained workers.

The economy of Washington County and Northeastern North Carolina is driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture. The addition of the agricultural science school to the region would bring additional training opportunities for our students and would prepare them for jobs within North Carolina.

We believe that this school complements the local high schools in the area. The school will bring additional resources and educators to the Vernon James Center, which is a proven applied research commodity in the region and state.

Sincerely,

David M. Peele, Ph.D.
President

252-482-2133 • Fax: 252-482-8622

Mailing: P.O. Box 129, Merry Hill, NC 27957 • Shipping: 841 Avoca Farm Road, Merry Hill, NC 27957

Beaufort County Board of Education

ROBERT G. BELCHER, CHAIRMAN
F. MAC HODGES, VICE CHAIRMAN
DR. TERESSA W. BANKS
ELTHA S. BOOTH
BARBARA BOYD-WILLIAMS

DR. DON PHIPPS
SUPERINTENDENT

E.C. PEED
WILLIAM S. WARREN
MIKE ISBELL
CINDY WINSTEAD

RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS the economy of Washington County, NC and the surrounding area is driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture, and

WHEREAS many students in the local schools live in rural areas or on farms where they learn the value of work, the multi-craftsmanship of entrepreneurship, and the skill of building networking support combined with independence, and

WHEREAS an Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School in Washington County would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area, and


WHEREAS the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Beaufort County Schools supports the concept of an Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School located in Washington County, NC at the site of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center.

Adopted this 13th day of December, 2010.

Attest:


Robert Belcher, Chair, Board of Education


Don Phipps, Ed.D., Superintendent

WASHINGTON BEAUFORT COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Established 1904



WHEREAS NC Senate Bill 1199 established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission to develop a plan for a regional school and ensure that the model is replicable, sustainable, and scalable, and

WHEREAS the economy of Washington County, NC and the surrounding area is driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture, and

WHEREAS many students in the local schools live in rural areas or on farms where they learn the value of work, the multi-craftsmanship of entrepreneurship, and the skill of building networking support combined with independence, and

WHEREAS Bertie County Schools has a sustainable ag science high school that is recognized as a model within the region, and

WHEREAS an ag science high school in Washington County would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area, and

WHEREAS the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Washington-Beaufort County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors supports the establishment of a regional ag high school located in Washington County, NC at the site of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center.

Adopted this 14th day of December, 2010.

Attest:

Catherine M. Blaney, Executive Director
On behalf of Board of Directors



Beaufort County Community College

P.O. Box 1069 Washington, NC 27889

Dr. John Farrelly
Superintendent
Washington County Schools
802 Washington St.
Plymouth, NC 27962

Dear Dr. Farrelly:

On behalf of Beaufort County Community College, we wish to express support for the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School to be located at the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center in Washington County.

The economy of Washington County and the surrounding area is driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture. The addition of the ag science school to the region would bring additional training opportunities for our students and would prepare them well for jobs within North Carolina.

We believe that this school complements the current ag science school located in Bertie County and that the new school in Washington County would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area. The school will also bring additional resources and educators to the Vernon James Center, which is already a proven applied research commodity in the region and state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mitchell St. Clair".

Mitchell St. Clair
Chair, Board of Trustees

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David McLawhorn".

David McLawhorn, Ed.D
President

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS NC Senate Bill 1199 established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission to develop a plan for a regional school and ensure that the model is replicable, sustainable, scalable, and

WHEREAS the economy of Washington County, NC and the surrounding area is driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture, and

WHEREAS many students in the local schools live in rural areas or on farms where they learn the value of work, the multi-craftsmanship of entrepreneurship, and the skill of building networking support combined with independence, and


WHEREAS an ag science high school in Washington County would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area, including Beaufort County and

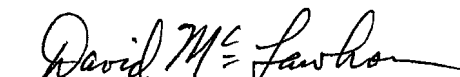
WHEREAS the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Beaufort County Community College supports the concept of a regional ag high school located in Washington County, NC at the site of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center.

Adopted this 10th day of December, 2010.

Attest:


Mitchell St. Clair, Chair, Board of Trustees


David McLawhorn, Ed.D., President

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, NC Senate Bill 1199 established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission to develop a plan for a regional school and ensure that the model is replicable, sustainable, and scaleable; and

WHEREAS, the economy of Bertie County, NC and the surrounding counties are driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture; and

WHEREAS, many students in the local schools live in rural areas or on farms where they learn the value of work, the multi-craftsmanship of entrepreneurship, and the skill of building networking support combined with independence; and

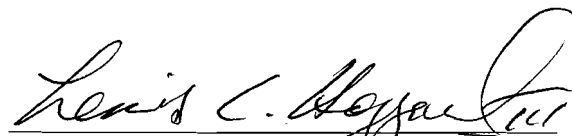
WHEREAS, Bertie County Schools has a sustainable ag science high school that is recognized as a model within the region, and Bertie County plans to continue with the assistance of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center's New Schools Project; and

WHEREAS, the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area and will provide support to Bertie County's Ag Science High School; and

WHEREAS, the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Bertie County Board of Commissioners supports the establishment of a regional ag high school located in Washington County, NC at the site of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center.

Adopted this 15th day of November, 2010.


Lewis C. Hoggard, III, Vice-Chairman


Misty J. Deanes, Clerk to the Board

BERTIE COUNTY SCHOOLS

P.O. BOX 10
222 COUNTY FARM ROAD
WINDSOR, NORTH CAROLINA 27983
PHONE (252) 794-3173 - FAX: (252) 794-9727



Dr. William R. Crawford
Interim Superintendent

BOARD MEMBERS
GLORIA C. LEE, Chair
ALTON PARKER, Vice-Chairman
RICKEY M. FREEMAN
PAMELA CHAMBLEE
EMMA JOHNSON

November 4, 2010

WHEREAS NC Senate Bill 1199 established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission to develop a plan for a regional school and ensure that the model is replicable, sustainable, and scaleable, and

WHEREAS the economy of Bertie County, NC and the surrounding counties are driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture, and

WHEREAS many students in the local schools live in rural areas or on farms where they learn the value of work, the multi-craftsmanship of entrepreneurship, and the skill of building networking support combined with independence, and

WHEREAS Bertie County Schools has a sustainable ag science high school that is recognized as a model within the region, and Bertie County plans to continue with the assistance of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center's New Schools Project, and

WHEREAS the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area and will provide support to Bertie County's Ag Science High School.

WHEREAS the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Bertie County Board of Education supports the establishment of a regional ag high school located in Washington County, NC at the site of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center.

Adopted this 4 day of November, 2010.

Attest: *Gloria Lee*
Gloria Lee, Board Chair

Attest: *Alton Parker*
Alton Parker, Board Vice-Chair



December 2, 2010

Dr. John Farrelly
Superintendent
Washington County Schools
802 Washington St.
Plymouth, NC 27962

Dear Dr. Farrelly:

The BioNetwork Bioprocessing Center supports establishment of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School located at the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center in Washington County.

The economy of Washington County and the surrounding area is driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries. It is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture. The addition of an agricultural science school to the region would bring additional training opportunities to our students and would prepare them well for jobs within North Carolina.

The BioNetwork Bioprocessing Center believes that this school complements the current agricultural high school located in Bertie County and that the new school in Washington County would provide the needed additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area. The school will also bring new resources and educators to the Vernon James Center, which is already a proven applied research asset in the region and state.

Our Center will support the school by serving as a resource to both students and faculty in the areas of outreach, curriculum materials development, and equipment recommendations.

Sincerely,

William Toombs

William T. Cooper, Jr.
Manager



Blackland Farm Managers Association

December 14, 2010

Dr. John Farrelly
Superintendent
Washington County Schools
802 Washington St.
Plymouth, NC 27962

Dear Dr. Farrelly:

The Blackland Farm Managers Association is pleased to endorse the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School to be located at the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center in Washington County.

Agriculture is one of the largest private employers in the region surrounding the Vernon James Center, and our organization is committed to building the economic and community resources related to agriculture. The Blackland Farm Managers Association has supported the Vernon James Center since before it was placed in Washington County, and we value the work of the scientists and other extension personnel at the facility.

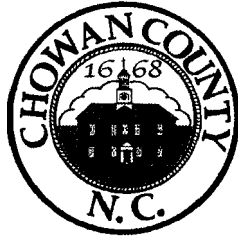
We believe the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School will attract additional resources and activity to a facility that has existing capacity. The laboratories, greenhouses, research projects, and professors are already in place and can be a valuable asset to the new high school.

This school will broaden the job market for students in the area, and it will help train a workforce that is interested and knowledgeable about agriculture. Our organization is willing to support this effort for a regional school.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darren Armstrong".

Darren Armstrong
President



RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, NC Senate Bill 1199 established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission to develop a plan for a regional school and ensure that the model is replicable, sustainable, and scalable, and;

WHEREAS, the economy of Chowan County, NC and the surrounding area is heavily influenced by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture, and;

WHEREAS, many students live in rural areas or on farms where they learn the value of work, the multi-craftsmanship of entrepreneurship, and the skill of building networking support combined with independence, and;

WHEREAS, Edenton-Chowan Schools has a sustainable vocational agriculture program at John A. Holmes High School, and;

WHEREAS, an Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional High School in northeast North Carolina would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area, and;

WHEREAS, the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission, and;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Chowan County Board of Commissioners supports the establishment of a regional Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional High School located in Washington County, NC at the site of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center.

Adopted this 6th day of December, 2010.

Edward C. Goodwin, Chairman

Susanne Stallings, Clerk

AG SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, NC Senate Bill 1199 established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission to develop a plan for a regional school and ensure that the model is replicable, sustainable, and scaleable, and

WHEREAS, the economy of Washington County, NC and the surrounding area is driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture, and

WHEREAS, many students in the local schools live in rural areas or on farms where they learn the value of work, the multi-craftsmanship of entrepreneurship, and the skill of building networking support combined with independence, and

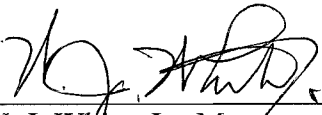
WHEREAS, Bertie County Schools has a sustainable ag science high school that is recognized as a model within the region, and

WHEREAS, an ag science high school in Washington County would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area, and

WHEREAS, the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission.

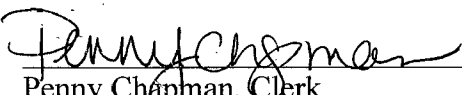
NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Creswell Town Board of Commissioners supports the establishment of a regional ag high school located in Washington County, NC at the site of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center.

Adopted this 13th day of December, 2010.



W. J. White, Jr., Mayor

(ATTEST)



Penny Chapman, Clerk



College of The Albemarle

1868-1968

December 15, 2010

Dr. John Farrelly, Superintendent
Washington County Schools
802 Washington Street
Plymouth, NC 27962

Dear Dr. Farrelly:

On behalf of College of The Albemarle (COA) I wish to express support for the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School to be located at the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center in Washington County.

The economy of Washington County and the surrounding area is driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture. The addition of the ag science school to the region would bring additional training opportunities for our students and would prepare them well for jobs within North Carolina.

We believe that this school complements the current ag science school located in Bertie County and that the new school in Washington County would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area. The school will also bring additional resources and educators to the Vernon James Center, which is already a proven applied research commodity in the region and state.

COA is committed to assist where needed in support of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School in Washington County.

Sincerely,

Kandi W. Deitemeyer, Ed.D.
President

Edenton-Chowan Campus
1316-C North Broad Street
Edenton, NC 27932
(252) 482-7900
(252) 482-7999

Elizabeth City Campus
P.O. Box 2327
Elizabeth City, NC 27906
(252) 335-0821
(252) 335-2011

Dare County Campus
132 Russell Twiford Road
Manteo, NC 27954
(252) 473-2264
(252) 473-5497

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Campus Box 7601
Raleigh, NC 27695-7601

919.515.2668
919.515.6980 (fax)
cals_dean@ncsu.edu

December 6, 2010

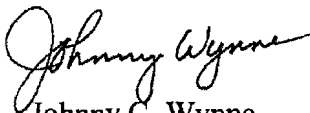
Dr. John Farrelly
Member, Agriscience and Biotechnology
Regional School Planning Commission
Superintendent
Washington County Schools
252-793-5171
jfarrelly@washingtonco.k12.nc.us

Dear Dr. Farrelly:

The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University and I are very excited to learn that the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located near Plymouth, North Carolina is one of the locations being considered by the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission to house a regional school of agriscience and biotechnology.

Part of the mission of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center is designed to enhance the agricultural enterprises, natural resources and environment in the 17 counties which make up Northeastern North Carolina. The location places the center almost directly in the geographic center of the Northeast Region. The facility contains a 300 person auditorium, seven operational agricultural science laboratories for students to train with the most up-to-date equipment and technology being used in both agricultural and university settings and is staffed by excellent researchers and faculty. These reasons make me fully confident that an early college agriscience and biotechnology high school will be very successful at the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center and will be provide an excellent addition to its function and mission.

Sincerely yours,



Johnny C. Wynne
Dean and Executive Director
For Agricultural Programs



EDENTON-CHOWAN SCHOOLS

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Post Office Box 206 Edenton, North Carolina 27932
Telephone: (252) 482-4436 Fax: (252) 482-7309
www.ecps.k12.nc.us

Allan T. Smith, *Superintendent*

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, NC Senate Bill 1199 established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission to develop a plan for a regional school and ensure that the model is replicable, sustainable, and scalable, and;

WHEREAS, the economy of Chowan County, NC and the surrounding area is heavily influenced by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture, and;

WHEREAS, many students live in rural areas or on farms where they learn the value of work, the multi-craftsmanship of entrepreneurship, and the skill of building networking support combined with independence, and;

WHEREAS, Edenton-Chowan Schools has a sustainable vocational agriculture program at John A. Holmes High School, and;

WHEREAS, an Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional High School in northeast North Carolina would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area, and;

WHEREAS, the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission, and;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Edenton-Chowan Board of Education supports the establishment of a regional Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional High School located in Washington County, NC at the site of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center.

Adopted this 6th day of December, 2010.

EDENTON-CHOWAN BOARD OF EDUCATION


Ricky Browder, Chairman


Allan T. Smith, Superintendent

RESOLUTION NO 10-68

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GREENVILLE,
NORTH CAROLINA, EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A
REGIONAL AG HIGH SCHOOL IN WASHINGTON COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

WHEREAS, Session Law 2010-183 of the North Carolina General Assembly established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission to develop a plan for a regional school and ensure that the model is replicable, sustainable and scaleable;

WHEREAS, the economy of Washington County, North Carolina and the surrounding area is driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture;

WHEREAS, many students in the local schools live in rural areas or on farms where they learn the value of work, the multi-craftsmanship of entrepreneurship, and the skill of building networking support combined with independence;

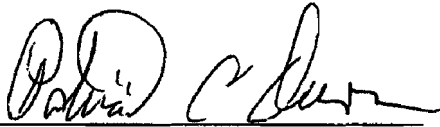
WHEREAS, Bertie County Schools has a sustainable ag science high school that is recognized as a model within the region;

WHEREAS, an ag science high school in Washington County would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area; and

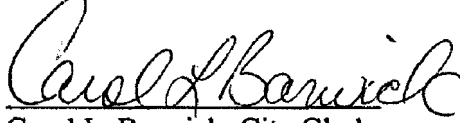
WHEREAS, the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Greenville that it does hereby express its support for the establishment of a regional ag high school located in Washington County, North Carolina at the site of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center.

This the 9th day of December, 2010


Patricia C. Dunn, Mayor

ATTEST:


Carol L. Barwick, City Clerk

Regional Agriscience and Biotechnology School Resolution

WHEREAS NC Senate Bill 1199 established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission to develop a plan for a regional school and ensure that the model is replicable, sustainable, and scaleable, and

WHEREAS the economy of Notheastern, NC and the surrounding area is driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture, and

WHEREAS many students in the local schools live in rural areas or on farms where they learn the value of work, the multi-craftsmanship of entrepreneurship, and the skill of building networking support combined with independence, and

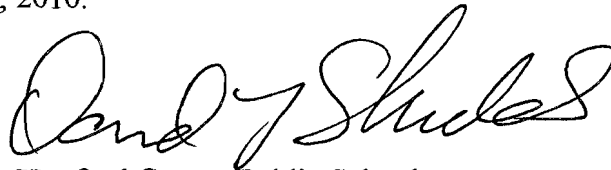
WHEREAS an agriculture-science high school in Washington County would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area, and

WHEREAS the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Hertford County supports the concept of a regional agriscience high school located in Washington County, NC at the site of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center.

Adopted this sixth day of December, 2010.

Attest:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andy Shuler", written in a cursive style.

Hertford County Public Schools
School Board Chair

COUNTY OF HYDE

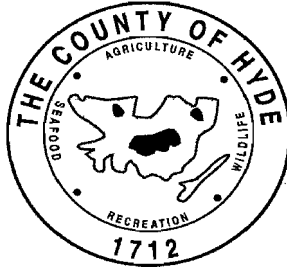
Board of Commissioners

Tom Davis, Chair
Sharon Spencer, Vice-Chair
Anson Byrd
Ken Collier
Darlene Styron

30 Oyster Creek Road
PO Box 188
SWAN QUARTER, NORTH CAROLINA 27885
252-926-4400
252-926-3701 Fax

David Smitherman
Interim County Manager
Clerk to the Board

Sid Hassell
County Attorney



November 16, 2010

Ms. Anita Johnson
NC's Northeast Commission
119 West Water Street
Edenton, N. C. 27934

Dear Ms Johnson,

The Hyde County Board of Commissioners met last night and voted in favor of the resolution for the Agriscience high school.

It is with great anticipation we look forward to the beginning of this new high school in our area. It offers great potential to all area residents.

If you have any questing please let us know or if we can help with anything else please call.

Sincerely,

David Smitherman
Clerk to the Board



Resolution No. 2010-11-04

HYDE COUNTY

RESOLUTION for the Establishment of the Agriscience and Bio Technology Regional School in Washington County

WHEREAS, North Carolina State Bill 1199 established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission to develop a plan for a regional school and ensure that the model is replicable, sustainable, and scalable, and

WHEREAS, the economy of Washington County, North Carolina and the surrounding areas is driven by agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agricultural, and

WHEREAS, many students in the local schools live in rural areas or on farms where they learn the value of work, the multi-craftsmanship of entrepreneurship, and the skill of building networking support combined with independence, and


WHEREAS, Bertie County Schools has a sustainable ag science high school that is recognized as a model within the region; and

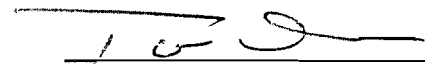
WHEREAS, the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission.

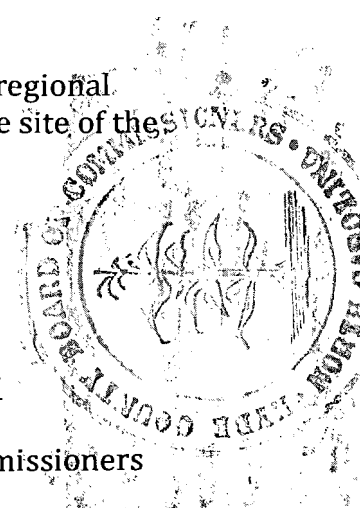
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

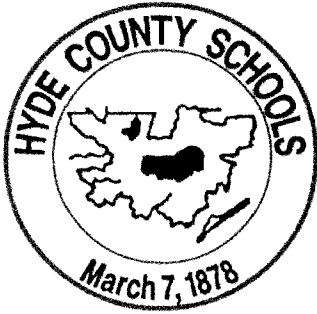
The Hyde County Board of Commissioners supports the establishment of a regional Agriscience high school located in Washington County, North Carolina at the site of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center.

Adopted this the 15th day of November, 2010.

ATTEST: 
David Smitherman
Clerk to the Board


Tom Davis, Chairman
Hyde County Board of Commissioners





Hyde County Schools

1430 Main Street
P.O. Box 217

Swan Quarter, NC 27885
Office (252) 926-3281
Fax (252) 926-3083

BOARD OF EDUCATION
Thomas L. Whitaker, Chairman
John L. Mullen
David G. Tolson
Willie Shaw
Diantha Coley

Superintendent
Dr. Randolph H. Latimore, Sr.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSED AGRISCIENCE AND BIOTECHNOLOGY REGIONAL SCHOOL

WHEREAS NC Senate Bill 1199 established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission to develop a plan for a regional school and ensure that the model is replicable, sustainable, and scalable, and;

WHEREAS the economy of Northeastern NC is significantly driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture, and;

WHEREAS many students in the local schools live in rural areas, farms or small towns where they learn the value of work, the multi-craftsmanship of entrepreneurship, and the skill of building networking support combined with independence, and;

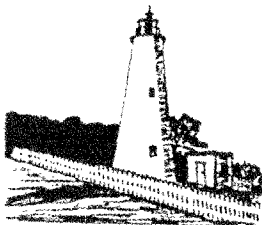
WHEREAS the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission.

NOW THEREFORE, BE. IT RESOLVED that the Hyde County Board of Education supports the establishment of an Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional High School located in Washington County, NC at the site of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center; and that students enrolled in the Hyde County School System will have the opportunity to apply for admission.

Adopted this 7th day of December 2010.

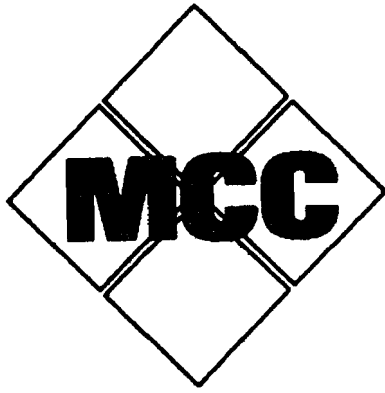
Attest: David G. Tolson
Mr. David Tolson, Vice Chair
Hyde County Board of Education

Attest: Randolph H. Latimore
Dr. Randolph H. Latimore, Sr.
Superintendent



Teamwork...Providing Quality Education for All Children





Martin Community College

1161 Kehukee Park Road, Williamston, NC 27892-8307
Phone (252) 792-1521 • Fax (252) 799-0585

Office of the President

December 13, 2010

Dr. John Farrelly
Superintendent
Washington County Schools
802 Washington St.
Plymouth, NC 27962

Dear Dr. Farrelly:

On behalf of Martin Community College, I wish to express support for the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School to be located at the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center in Washington County.

The economy of Washington County and the surrounding area is driven by agriculture and agricultural-related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture. The proposed Ag Science School in Washington County could benefit our students by providing additional training opportunities that would enhance their skills and prepare them well for jobs within North Carolina.

We believe that an Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School at the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center in Washington County would complement the current Ag Science School located in Bertie County as well as provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area. The Vernon James Center is recognized as an applied research commodity in the region and state, and the new school would bring additional resources and educators to the Center.

Martin Community College is interested in partnering/collaborating with the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School by offering educational opportunities as appropriate and needed for students enrolled at the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School.

Sincerely,

Ann R. Britt, Ed.D.
President

Proudly Serving Bertie, Martin, and Washington Counties
An Equal Opportunity Institution

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

RONNIE SMITH, CHAIRMAN
ELMO "BUTCH" LILLEY, VICE CHAIRMAN
C. MORT HURST
TOMMY W. BOWEN
DEREK PRICE



W. RUSSELL OVERMAN
COUNTY MANAGER

MARION B. THOMPSON
CLERK TO THE BOARD

P.O. BOX 668
WILLIAMSTON, NC 27892
(252) 789-4300
FAX (252) 789-4309
e-mail: martin@martincountyncgov.com

**RESOLUTION
SUPPORTING THE CONCEPT OF A
REGIONAL BIOTECHNOLOGY-AGRISCIENCE
EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL
IN WASHINGTON COUNTY**

WHEREAS, NC Senate Bill 1199 established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission to develop a plan for a regional school and ensure that the model is replicable, sustainable, and scalable; and

WHEREAS, the economy of Washington County, NC and the surrounding area is driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture; and

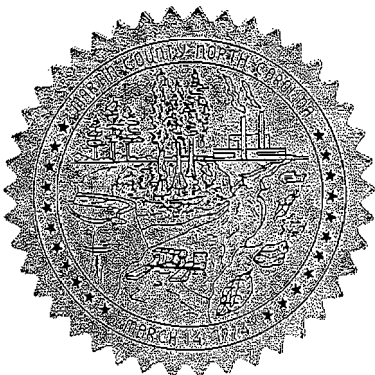
WHEREAS, many students in the local schools live in rural areas or on farms where they learn the value of work, the multi-craftsmanship of entrepreneurship, and the skill of building networking support combined with independence; and

WHEREAS, an Ag science high school in Washington County would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area; and

WHEREAS, the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Martin County Board of Commissioners supports the concept of a regional Ag high school located in Washington County, NC at the site of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center.

Adopted the 6th day of December, 2010.



Elmo "Butch" Lilley
Elmo "Butch" Lilley, Chairman

Marion B. Thompson
Marion B. Thompson, Clerk to the Board

MARTIN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS NC Senate Bill 1199 established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission to develop a plan for a regional school and ensure that the model is replicable, sustainable, and scalable, and

WHEREAS the economy of Washington County, NC and the surrounding area is driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture, and

WHEREAS many students in the local schools live in rural areas or on farms where they learn the value of work, the multi-craftsmanship of entrepreneurship, and the skill of building networking support combined with independence, and

WHEREAS an ag science high school in Washington County would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area, and

WHEREAS the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE Martin County Board of Education supports the concept of a regional ag high school located in Washington County, NC at the site of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center.

Adopted this 6th day of December, 2010.


Gene Scott, Chairman

Attest:


Ron Melchiorre, Secretary

NC POTATO ASSOCIATION, INC.

Post Office Box 2066 Elizabeth City, North Carolina 27906 252-331-4773

December 9, 2010

Dr. John Farrelly
Superintendent
Washington County Schools
802 Washington St.
Plymouth, NC 27962

Dear Dr. Farrelly,

During our N.C. Potato Association board of directors meeting on December 8, 2010 discussion was held concerning the location of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School. The N.C. Potato Association supports locating the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School at the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center in Plymouth, N.C. Please see the enclosed form that is signed by me, current president of the N.C. Potato Association and board of director Jimmy Harrell.

Sincerely,



Reuben James, President

During the 2010 Session of the North Carolina General Assembly, Senate Bill 1199 was ratified which states:

AN ACT TO CREATE THE AGRISCIENCE AND BIOTECHNOLOGY REGIONAL SCHOOL PLANNING COMMISSION TO DEVELOP AND PLAN A REGIONAL SCHOOL OF AGRISCIENCE AND BIOTECHNOLOGY.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. There is established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission. The purpose of the Commission shall be to develop and plan a regional school of agriscience and biotechnology. The Commission shall be located administratively in the Department of Public Instruction but shall exercise its powers and duties independently of the Department of Public Instruction. The Department of Public Instruction shall provide for the administrative costs of the Commission and shall provide staff to the Commission.

SECTION 2. The Commission shall consist of up to nine members appointed by the chair of the State Board of Education. Appointments shall be made no later than September 1, 2010.

SECTION 3. The Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission shall develop a plan for a regional school of agriscience and biotechnology and shall ensure that the model is replicable, sustainable, and scaleable. In the development of its plan, the Commission shall:

- (1) Consider the regional school's governance, funding for operational and capital needs, personnel, admissions and assignment of students, transportation, school food services, and other issues the Commission deems relevant.
- (2) Solicit proposals from interested regions seeking to host the school and identify a location for the regional school.
- (3) Identify potential business partners for the regional school.
- (4) Consult with North Carolina State University and the NC Research Campus and establish connections between those institutions and the regional school.

SECTION 4. The Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission shall report on its recommended plan to the State Board of Education, the Joint Legislative Joining Our Businesses and Schools (JOBS) Study Commission, and the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by January 1, 2011.

Because the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School planning Commission is charged with identifying the location for the school and because the commission is also seeking proposals and letters/resolutions of support from areas where the school may be located, the following information is presented to encourage support and indicate the advantages of locating the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School at the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center.

Advantages to Locate the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School at the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center

The Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center is a 32,000 square foot facility located 2 miles due East of Plymouth, North Carolina in Washington County. Its mission and all activities conducted there are designed to enhance the agricultural enterprises, natural resources and environment in the 17 counties which make up Northeastern North Carolina. The location places the center almost directly in the geographic center of the Northeast Region which gives a strategic advantage for students located in all of the counties that make up the Northeast Region to gain access to an early college high school. The facility contains a 300 person auditorium, seven operational agricultural science laboratories, offices and support space which will provide immediate educational opportunities for students to train with the most up-to-date equipment and technology being used in both agricultural and university settings. Furthermore, the location of an early college high school at the VJC will allow students to gain access to and be a part of the discussion process for all major new agricultural initiatives and incentives proposed for the Northeast Region which will enhance student learning and achievement

The VJC is part of The Tidewater Research Station. The Station occupies 1558 acres of which 840 are woodland, 428 are cropland, 195 are pastures and 95 are used for roadways, waterways, support facilities, and aquaculture ponds. Research studies conducted at the Station involve field crops, livestock, aquaculture, horticulture, and soil & water. Students will have unique opportunities to intern with researchers in order to be able to put in practice the scientific and research methods of experiential learning so necessary for them to have a better chance of academic success. Also, because of this unique partnership between the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and North Carolina State University, students will have the opportunity to work and study directly under the tutorage of the faculty and staff from both agencies which are some of the most renowned and respected throughout the state and nation. Their combined expertise are in the areas of agricultural and extension education, animal science, crop science, entomology, horticultural science and soil science including soil fertility, tillage and soil management and onsite wastewater management. Early College students will be exposed to almost all facets of agriculture by being closely connected to this vast array of research extension and faculty specialists who will, in turn provide a better opportunity for students enrolled to have a high degree of success with college level course work. Along with the faculty and staff, the VJC provides administrative support expertise ready to assist the principal, faculty, staff and students of the Early College with VJC facility scheduling, faculty/student advisory meetings, the introduction of a broader contingent of faculty and university resources and helping the principal maneuver through and become comfortable with the NCSU culture.

WHEREAS NC Senate Bill 1199 established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission to develop a plan for a regional school and ensure that the model is replicable, sustainable, and scaleable, and

WHEREAS the economy of Northeastern NC is significantly driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture, and

WHEREAS many students in the local schools live in rural areas, farms or small towns where they learn the value of work, the multi-craftsmanship of entrepreneurship, and the skill of building networking support combined with independence, and

WHEREAS the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission.

NOW THEREFORE, BE. IT RESOLVED that the NC Potato Association supports the establishment of a regional ag high school located in Washington County, NC at the site of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center.

Adopted this 8th day of December 2010.

I

Attest:

Reuben James

Attest:

Jim Harrell



**North
Carolina
Biotechnology
Center**

EASTERN OFFICE

Greenville Centre

Suite 1400

2200 South Charles Boulevard

Greenville, NC 27858-5235

USA

252-328-9981

fax 252-328-9984

ASHEVILLE

GREENVILLE

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK

WILMINGTON

WINSTON-SALEM

December 7, 2010

Dr. John Farrelly
Superintendent
Washington County Schools
802 Washington St.
Plymouth, NC 27962

Dear Dr. Farrelly:

On behalf of the North Carolina Biotechnology Center, I wish to express support for the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School to be located at the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center in Washington County.

The economy of Washington County and the surrounding area is driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture. The addition of the ag science school to the region would bring additional training opportunities for our students and would prepare them well for jobs within North Carolina.

We believe that this school complements the current ag science school located in Bertie County and that the new school in Washington County would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area. The school will also bring additional resources and educators to the Vernon James Center, which is already a proven applied research commodity in the region and state.

Sincerely,

Mark Phillips
Executive Director
Eastern Office

Eddie Lynch
Chair



Vann Rogerson
President/CEO

December 10, 2010

Dr. John Farrelly
Superintendent
Washington County Schools
802 Washington St.
Plymouth, NC 27962

Dear Dr. Farrelly:

On behalf of the NC's Northeast Commission, I wish to express support for the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School to be located at the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center in Washington County.

The economy of Washington County and the surrounding area is driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture. The addition of the ag science school to the region would bring additional training opportunities for our students and would prepare them well for jobs within North Carolina.

We believe that this school complements the current ag science school located in Bertie County and that the new school in Washington County would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area. The school will also bring additional resources and educators to the Vernon James Center, which is already a proven applied research commodity in the region and state.

Our organization is committed to developing the region as a center for agricultural biotechnology, and this school will assist in this regional goal.

Sincerely,

Vann Rogerson
President/CEO

Eddie Lynch
Chair



Vann Rogerson
President/CEO

AG SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL RESOLUTION

WHEREAS NC Senate Bill 1199 established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission to develop a plan for a regional school and ensure that the model is replicable, sustainable, and scaleable, and

WHEREAS the economy of Washington County, NC and the surrounding area is driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture, and

WHEREAS many students in the local schools live in rural areas or on farms where they learn the value of work, the multi-craftsmanship of entrepreneurship, and the skill of building networking support combined with independence, and

WHEREAS Bertie County Schools has a sustainable ag science high school that is recognized as a model within the region, and

WHEREAS an ag science high school in Washington County would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area, and

WHEREAS the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the NORTH CAROLINA'S NORTHEAST COMMISSION supports the establishment of a regional ag high school located in Washington County, NC at the site of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center.

Adopted this 6th day of December, 2010.

Attest:

Eddie Lynch, Chair

Brady Martin
Chair



Vann Rogerson
President/CEO

December 10, 2010

Dr. John Farrelly
Superintendent
Washington County Schools
802 Washington St.
Plymouth, NC 27962

Dear Dr. Farrelly:

On behalf of the NC's Northeast Committee of 1000, I wish to express support for the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School to be located at the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center in Washington County.


The NC's Northeast Committee of 1000 is a group of private businesses who participate in economic development efforts in the northeastern region of North Carolina. We believe that agricultural biotechnology can bring an economic change to the region and that an ag biotech high school can be instrumental in preparing students for jobs of the future.

The economy of Washington County and the surrounding area is driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture. The addition of the ag science school to the region would bring additional training opportunities for our students and would prepare them well for jobs within North Carolina.

We believe that this school complements the current ag science school located in Bertie County and that the new school in Washington County would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area. The school will also bring additional resources and educators to the Vernon James Center, which is already a proven applied research commodity in the region and state.

Our organization is committed to developing the region as a center for agricultural biotechnology, and this school will assist in this regional goal.

Sincerely,



Brady Martin
Chairman

NORTH CAROLINA'S NORTHEAST COMMITTEE OF 1000
119 W Water St, Edenton, NC 27932, (252)482-4333, www.ncnortheast.com

Bill Early
Chair



Vann Rogerson
President/CEO

AG SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL RESOLUTION

WHEREAS NC Senate Bill 1199 established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission to develop a plan for a regional school and ensure that the model is replicable, sustainable, and scaleable, and

WHEREAS the economy of Washington County, NC and the surrounding area is driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture, and

WHEREAS many students in the local schools live in rural areas or on farms where they learn the value of work, the multi-craftsmanship of entrepreneurship, and the skill of building networking support combined with independence, and

WHEREAS Bertie County Schools has a sustainable ag science high school that is recognized as a model within the region, and

WHEREAS an ag science high school in Washington County would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area, and

WHEREAS the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission, and

WHEREAS the Northeast Economic Developers (NEED) is made up of economic development representatives from the 16 counties of the Northeast Region and as a group are committed to economic development, which includes marketing the region for agricultural biotechnology.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Northeast Economic Developers (NEED) supports the establishment of a regional ag high school located in Washington County, NC at the site of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center.

Adopted this 10th day of December, 2010.

Attest:

Bill Early, Chair, NEED



MARY P. HUNNICUTT
CLERK TO BOARD

BOBBY C. DARDEN
COUNTY MANAGER

PERQUIMANS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

P.O. BOX 45
HERTFORD, NORTH CAROLINA 27944
TELEPHONE: 1-252-426-7550

MACK E. NIXON
CHAIRMAN

TAMMY MILLER-WHITE
VICE CHAIR

JANICE MCKENZIE COLE

BENJAMIN C. HOBBS

CHARLES H. WARD

SUE WEIMAR

W. HACKNEY HIGH, JR.
COUNTY ATTORNEY

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, NC Senate Bill 1199 established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission to develop a plan for a regional school and ensure that the model is replicable, sustainable, and scaleable, and;

WHEREAS, the economy of Perquimans County, NC and the surrounding area is heavily influenced by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture, and;

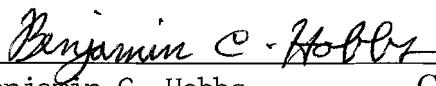
WHEREAS, many students in the local schools live in rural areas or on farms where they learn the value of work, the multi-craftsmanship of entrepreneurship, and the skill of building networking support combined with independence, and;

WHEREAS, an Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional High School in northeast North Carolina would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area, and;


WHEREAS, the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission, and;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Perquimans County Board of Education supports the concept of a regional Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional High School located in Washington County, NC at the site of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center.

Adopted this 6th day of December, 2010.


Benjamin C. Hobbs, Chairman
Perquimans County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:


Mary P. Hunnicutt, Clerk to the Board
Perquimans County Board of Commissioners



Perquimans County Board of Education

PERQUIMANS COUNTY SCHOOLS

P.O. Box 337
Hertford, NC 27944
Phone (252) 426-5741
Fax (252) 426-4913
Website
<http://www.pcs.k12.nc.us/>

Dwayne K. Stallings, Ed.D.
Superintendent

James R. Bunch
Assistant Superintendent

Board of Education

Amy Spaugh, Chair
Arlene Yates, Vice-Chair
Susan Cox
Ralph Hollowell
Walter Leigh
Wallace Nelson

WHEREAS, NC Senate Bill 1199 established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission to develop a plan for a regional school and ensure that the model is replicable, sustainable, and scaleable, and;

WHEREAS, the economy of Perquimans County, NC and the surrounding area is heavily influenced by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture, and;

WHEREAS, many students in the local schools live in rural areas or on farms where they learn the value of work, the multi-craftsmanship of entrepreneurship, and the skill of building networking support combined with independence, and;

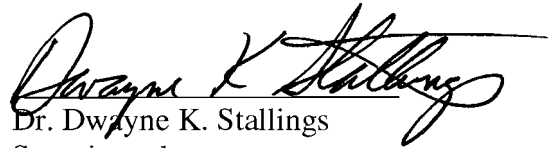
WHEREAS, an Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional High School in northeast North Carolina would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area, and;

WHEREAS, the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission, and;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Perquimans County Board of Education supports the concept of a regional Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional High School located in Washington County, NC at the site of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center.

Adopted by the Perquimans County Board of Education this 6th day of December, 2010.


Amy G. Spaugh
Board Chairwoman


Dr. Dwayne K. Stallings
Superintendent



Resolution in Support of Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional High School

WHEREAS NC Senate Bill 1199 established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission to develop a plan for a regional school and ensure that the model is replicable, sustainable, and scaleable, and

WHEREAS the economy of Chowan County, NC and the surrounding area is heavily influenced by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture, and

WHEREAS many students live in rural areas or on farms where they learn the value of work, the multi-craftsmanship of entrepreneurship, and the skill of building networking support combined with independence, and

WHEREAS Edenton-Chowan Schools has a sustainable vocational agriculture program at John A. Holmes High School, and;

WHEREAS an Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional High School in northeastern North Carolina would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area, and;

WHEREAS the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Edenton Town Council supports the establishment of a regional Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional High School located in Washington County, NC at the site of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center.

Adopted this 14th Day of December, 2010

Mayor Roland Vaughan

Town Clerk

Printed on Recycled Paper

P.O. Box 300, Edenton, N.C. 27932 - (252) 482-2155
(252) 482-7377 - FAX

ROANOKE RIVER MAYORS ASSOCIATION
ROANOKE RIVER REGION
NORTH CAROLINA

AG SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL RESOLUTION

WHEREAS NC Senate Bill 1199 established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission to develop a plan for a regional school and ensure that the model is replicable, sustainable, and scalable, and

WHEREAS the economy of Washington County, NC and the surrounding area is driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture, and

WHEREAS many students in the local schools live in rural areas or on farms where they learn the value of work, the multi-craftsmanship of entrepreneurship, and the skill of building networking support combined with independence, and

WHEREAS Bertie County Schools has a sustainable agriculture science high school that is recognized as a model within the region, and

WHEREAS an agriculture science high school in Washington County would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area, and

WHEREAS the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Roanoke River Mayors Association supports the establishment of a regional agriculture high school located in Washington County, NC at the site of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center

Adopted this thirtieth day of November, 2010.

Attest:



Tommy E. Roberson
Chairman

WHEREAS NC Senate Bill 1199 established the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission to develop a plan for a regional school and ensure that the model is replicable , sustainable , and

WHEREAS the economy of Washington County, NC and the surrounding area is driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value – added crops and sustainable agriculture , and

WHEREAS many students in the local schools live in rural areas or on farms where they learn the value of work, the multi-craftsmanship of entrepreneurship , and the skill of building networking support combined with independence , and

WHEREAS Bertie County Schools has a sustainable ag science high school that is recognized as a model within the region, and

WHEREAS as ag science high school in Washington County would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area, and

WHEREAS the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Hamilton Mayor and Board of Commissioners supports the establishment of a regional high school located in Washington County, NC at the site of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center.

Adopted this 2nd day of December, 2010.

Attest: <u>Kimberly G. Edmondson</u>	Signed: <u>D.G. Matthews III</u>
Kimberly G. Edmondson, CMC	D.G. Matthews, III
Town Clerk	Mayor
Town of Hamilton	Town of Hamilton

AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL RESOLUTION

WHEREAS NC Senate Bill 1199 established the Agricultural Science and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission to develop a plan for a regional school and ensure that the model is replicable, sustainable, and scaleable, and

WHEREAS the economy of Washington County, NC and the surrounding area is driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture, and

WHEREAS many students in the local schools live in rural areas or on farms where they learn the value of work, the multi-craftsmanship of entrepreneurship, and the skill of building networking support combined with independence, and

WHEREAS Bertie County Schools has a sustainable agricultural science high school that is recognized as a model within the region, and

WHEREAS an agricultural science high school in Washington County would provide additional educational opportunities for a wider geographic area, and

WHEREAS the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agricultural Science and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Board of Oak City supports the establishment of a regional agricultural high school located in Washington County, NC at the site of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center.

Adopted this 8th day of December, 2010.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lynette Romero", written over a horizontal line.

Lynette Romero
Mayor

Attest: _____



December 5, 2010

**Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional
Planning Commission**

Gentlemen:

As the Mayor of Williamston, North Carolina, I gladly endorse the efforts to locate an agriculture science high school in Washington County, North Carolina. The Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center located in Washington County is an ideal location for a model school that supports the plans of the Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission.

The economy of Washington County, North Carolina and the surrounding area is driven by agriculture and agricultural related industries and is a prime location for the development of value-added crops and sustainable agriculture. Most students in the local schools live in rural areas or on farms where they learn the value of work, the need for entrepreneurship, and the skill of building networking support combined with independence.

The Town of Williamston and the greater Martin County area which is directly adjacent to Washington County has similar agricultural attributes which will compliment the placement of the school in an adjacent agricultural county.

I commend your efforts to develop a regional agricultural science high school.

Sincerely,

Tommy E. Roberson
Mayor
Town of Williamston

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE LOCATION OF A REGIONAL SCHOOL OF AGRISCIENCE AND BIOTECHNOLOGY IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 1199 was ratified during the 2010 Session of the North Carolina General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 1199 requires that an Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission be established with the mandate to develop and plan for the creation of a regional school of agriscience and biotechnology and that the Commission must recommend a situs to the North Carolina General Assembly by January 1, 2011; and

WHEREAS, the Commission must ensure that the regional school model is replicable, sustainable and scaleable with a planned governance structure, funding models and make recommendations regarding other operational details; and

WHEREAS, the major segment of the economic industrial foundation of Washington County and the Northeast region of North Carolina is agriculture based; and

WHEREAS, Washington County and the Northeast region of North Carolina has been the residence of a number of biotechnology enterprises; and

WHEREAS, Washington County and the Northeast region of North Carolina have (1) millions of acres of land and forest available to produce biotechnological genetically modified crops (GMO) and biofuels, (2) a sophisticated, capable and experienced workforce to produce GMO crops that must be expanded to meet future demands and (3) a culture whereby the region's children ascend into the agricultural industry who need specialized education to meet the future needs of the biotechnology and biofuels industries; and

WHEREAS, the Backlands Farmer's Association has been consistently involved and supportive of the establishment and implementation of the biotechnology agricultural industry in Northeast North Carolina, and

WHEREAS, North Carolina's Northeast Economic Development Commission and the North Carolina Biotechnology Center have identified and targeted Northeast North Carolina to become the hub for the production and commercialization of biotechnology related agricultural crops and production of biofuels in North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center and the Tidewater Research Station which are operated and staffed by North Carolina State University and located in Washington County is a premier consolidated facility that offers research study in the areas of field crops, forestry, livestock, aquaculture, horticulture, entomology and includes a world renowned faculty and staff; and

WHEREAS, the Vernon G. James Research Center and the Tideland Research Station encompass over 32,000 square feet of laboratory, greenhouse, office and auditorium space and a total of 1,558 acres of land (including 428 acres of cropland); and

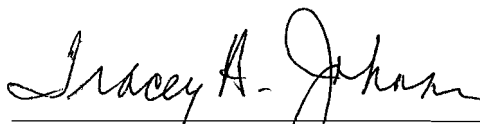
WHEREAS, the Vernon G. James Research Center and Tideland Research Station is highly accessible to potential regional students since it is in the geographic center of Northeast North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the proposed high school working in collaboration with the faculty and staff at the Vernon G. James Center and the Tideland Research Station will expose future students to almost all facets of world class agriscience and biotechnology research, offer knowledge and delivery of education to these students which will prepare them for careers in these industries or for continuation of their education at the university or community college levels; and

WHEREAS, Washington County has established a close working partnership with North Carolina State University's School of Agriculture and its Cooperative Extension Service and is developing partnerships with numerous individuals at the North Carolina Research Campus to advance the agriscience and biotechnology industries in the County and Northeast region of North Carolina,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Washington County Board of Commissioners promulgates its highest recommendation and complete support related to the location of an Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School at the location of the Vernon G. James Research Center.

ADOPTED this the 6th day of December, 2010.

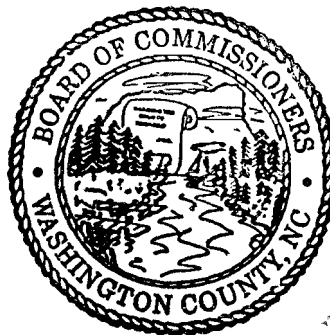


Tracey A. Johnson, Chair
Washington County Commissioners

ATTEST:



Julie J. Bennett
Clerk to the Board



Appendix C

Southwest Response to the Request for Information

Subject: Southwestern North Carolina Regional High School RFI–

Submitted By: Kannapolis City Schools and Cabarrus County Schools

In 2003, the Innovative Education Initiative Act was enacted by the General Assembly. That legislation instructed the Education Cabinet to set as a priority cooperative efforts between secondary schools and institutions of higher education to reduce the high school dropout rate, increase high school and college graduation rates, decrease the need for remediation in institutions of higher education, and raise certificate, associate, and bachelor degree completion rate. The Act also created Cooperative Innovative High School Programs, which authorized boards of trustees of community colleges and local boards of education to jointly establish cooperative innovative programs in high schools and community colleges that would expand students' opportunities for educational success through high quality instructional programming. During the last ten years, Cabarrus County and the Town of Kannapolis, North Carolina, have undergone a drastic economic change due to the closings of Cannon Mills, Pillowtex, Freightliner, Philip Morris and other leading manufacturers. Previously sustained by the textile and tobacco industry, the local labor force of the county is now heavily dependent upon knowledge-based and service-related industries. Globalization, the economic downturn, and the rising unemployment rate have significantly altered the employment options for students in this area. Recent studies from the Charlotte Regional Partnership indicate that tremendous job growth in this region will occur in health care, defense, finance, energy, film, and motorsports. As a result, Cabarrus County Schools (CCS) and Kannapolis City Schools (KCS) have designed a program that is a vehicle for economic development and workforce training for these new industries. In the wake of these economic changes to the region, some would argue that the road to achieving the American Dream for many of our students has changed. Therefore, this proposal is written to support the regional high school initiative legislated above, to equip our students via secondary and postsecondary training in preparation for 21st Century careers.

To prevent future recurrence of such losses to the region, Kannapolis City Schools and Cabarrus County Schools have formed a joint partnership to strongly encourage the North Carolina General Assembly to create a regional early college high school program, having as part of its focus the STEM themes of agriscience and biotechnology. A curriculum that embraces depth of

academics coupled with applied transferrable skills precludes the advent of such preventable social and academic losses.

Pursuant to the Request for Information (RFI) issued on November 18, 2010, by Mr. Rob Hines, Director, LEWA Projects, NC DPI, the following is submitted in consonance with page two of the RFI. This is a joint effort by a regional partnership between Kannapolis City Schools (KCS/Superintendent Dr. Pam Cain) and Cabarrus County Schools (CSS/Superintendent Dr. Barry Shepherd).

Section A – Evidences of commitments and partnerships.

Commitments by the respective KCS and CCS superintendents and their Board of Education for the Southwestern North Carolina Regional Early College High School have been secured (signed “Support Memorandum” included). Dialogues with both Iredell-Statesville Schools and Rowan-Salisbury Schools are underway, but at this point we have not been able to secure letters of commitment from their Boards of Education. Both KCS and CCS are willing to implement this program as outlined, with the vision of incorporating these neighboring systems in the near future.

Joining this effort are members of the higher education community including Rowan-Cabarrus Community College, NC State University, and the North Carolina Research Campus (letters of support attached).

Regional businesses supporting this effort include, but are not limited to, Castle and Cooke Enterprises, Cabarrus Regional Chamber of Commerce, with ongoing efforts to involve regional hospitals.

Additional support is coming from various non-profit agencies, such as North Carolina Extension Offices – 4-H of Cabarrus County, and North Carolina STEM Collaborative (letters included).

Section B – Regional economy and economic priorities of agriscience and biotechnology.

Agriculture in Cabarrus County*

Average size of farms: 111 acres

Harvested cropland as a percentage of land in farms: 36.73%

Irrigated harvested cropland as a percentage of land in farms: 1.44%

The percentage of farms operated by a family or individual: 90.27%

Average age of principal farm operators: 58 years

Corn for grain: 3577 harvested acres

All wheat for grain: 3428 harvested acres

Soybeans for beans: 6260 harvested acres
Vegetables: 51 harvested acres
Land in orchards: 68 acres

*Source: http://www.city-data.com/county/Cabarrus_County-NC.html#ixzz17X3nEyT2

The Southwestern North Carolina Regional Early College High School consortium embraces the concept that all agriscience and biotechnology within our region support the goal of improving human health. Not only do we embrace this concept but so do the following eight (8) colleges and universities who have invested their own strategic assets in this pursuit: Duke University - Translational Medicine Institute; University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill - Metabolic variations to develop nutrition solutions; N C State University - Plants for Human Health; University of North Carolina - Charlotte – Bioinformatics; North Carolina Central University- Nutrition Research; North Carolina A&T University- Post harvest technologies and food science; University of North Carolina - Greensboro - Bioactive Food Components; and Appalachian State University – Human Performance.

This multi-disciplinary effort within our region clearly supports the priorities established by the JOBS Commission for Cluster IV Health Science. Information provided by Dr. Victor Dzau indicates that our vision for the Southwest Regional High School captures salient points of the existing Duke University Medical School pilots.

Information from the latest *Cabarrus County Community Needs Assessment* shows that an Agriscience and Biotechnology School is necessary in this community. As part of the 2008 Cabarrus Community Needs Assessment, key leaders identified “**Jobs/Skills Mismatch**” as the most urgent issue facing Cabarrus County. Our community does not have enough qualified workers to fill jobs being created at the North Carolina Research Campus or at other industries moving to this area. Additional research for the Community Needs Assessment showed that poverty has more than doubled in Cabarrus County during this decade and that manufacturing jobs have declined by more than 38%. There is no doubt than an agriscience and biotechnology school could help train local students to fill the jobs being created here and help boost the regional economy for years to come.

Section C: Level of student interest in agriscience and biotechnology. Impact on community needs.

Within existing structures of Kannapolis City Schools and Cabarrus County Schools, there are seven of eight high schools and five of eight middle schools who offer courses related to agriscience and biotechnology. For the 2011-2012 school year, CCS will be opening a STEM magnet school and KCS has recently built a biotech wing on their existing campus.

Course Title	2009-2010 Enrollment	2010-2011 Enrollment	Course Title	2009-2010 Enrollment	2010-2011 Enrollment
Animal Science I	82	129	Intro to Biotechnology	44	54
Animal Science II	15	69	Honors Project Based Science	64	82
Biotech & Ag Research I	153	167	Honors Genetics and Biotechnology	6	9
Biotech & Ag Research I	3	44	AP Biology	139	165
Horticulture I	153	167	AP Chemistry	75	88
Horticulture II	32	90	AP Physics	15	27
Biomedical Technology	45	74	Anatomy & Physiology	3	15

The above data captures the strong interest extant in the student pool for STEM related coursework, precluding a need to market a STEM high school. The regional high school's curricular focus on agriscience and biotech would add a depth to the course offerings beyond what is currently available to KCS and CCS students, taking students beyond the introductory level in these disciplines.

Not only is there an interest from students, but also equally important is the demand from the community for graduates to be equipped in these areas. A recent pronouncement by the Cabarrus Regional Chamber of Commerce CEO, John Cox, affirms the need for a labor force prepared for both our regional workforce and higher education. North Carolina Governor Perdue's vision to sustain a strong education framework as the vehicle for the state's social and economic growth, the North Carolina State Board of Education's aggressive pursuit of educational excellence, and State Superintendent Dr. June Atkinsons' own initiatives "Ready, Set, Go!" all call for a state-wide focus on preparing students for post-secondary life. This transcends all regional geographic and/or political boundaries, be they geographic or political. Regional initiatives by the

consortium stakeholders call for 21st Century preparedness for its graduating students. Dropout prevention strategies outline a rigorous, relevant, and relational paradigm. The envisioned curriculum for the Southwest North Carolina Regional Early College High School embraces the community's mandates, the state government's mandates, and the local boards of education's mandates.

Section D: Connectivity to the resources of the North Carolina Research Campus and North Carolina State University.

Stephen Covey reminds us that synergy is key to any successful venture. Alliances with Dr. Steve Leath, Vice President of Research, NCRC; Lynne Safrit, Castle & Cooke/ Mr. Murdock; Dr. Jim Oblinger, Professor, NC MarketReady Plants for Human Health Institute, provide the Southwest North Carolina Regional Early College High School a synergistic and dynamic relationship with NCRC. Ultimately, the Southwest North Carolina Regional Early College High School will be positioned in close proximity to all students within the regional pool.

Section E: Proposed facilities for the regional school.

The consortium envisions the ideal setting for the Southwest North Carolina Regional Early College High School to be hosted by the Kannapolis City School system. Under that umbrella, two further options are under review: (1) Convert an existing structure in downtown Kannapolis into an educational facility or (2) Explore the possibility with NCRC to host this school on their campus in a structure built for this express purpose.

Fully appreciating the time constraints by the above options, CCS offers an existing facility which will serve as a temporary hosting site for the Southwest North Carolina Regional Early College High School. We would be working collaboratively to plan the curriculum, facility, and student population as we prepare the building that has been committed by Lynne Safrit, President of Castle and Cooke, with the North Carolina Research Campus.



4401 Old Airport Road
PO Box 388
Concord NC 28026-0388

704-262-6123
704-262-6175 fax

December 13, 2010

MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

The Cabarrus County Schools Board of Education supports the Cabarrus County Schools Systems' discussion with neighboring school systems with the purpose of establishing a regional high school whose focus would be on possible themes related to agriscience, biotechnology, health and related disciplines.

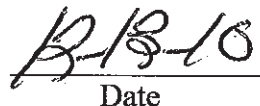
The Cabarrus County Schools Board of Education understands that this is in response to a request for information submitted by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction related to an early college high school that transcends geographic boundaries and provides the educational framework for 21st Century post-secondary school readiness.

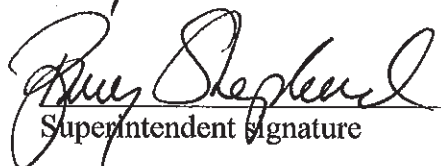
We agree with:

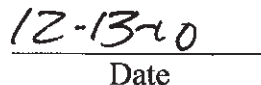
- The governance structure and commit to sending one Cabarrus County Schools Board member to represent us on the Southwest North Carolina Regional Early College High School Board of Education;
- The funding structure of up to, and not more than, 80% of the average daily membership generated by each student;
- The placement of the school within the Kannapolis City School District with a facility to be provided by Castle & Cooke, Inc. in the downtown Kannapolis area.

Should Kannapolis City Schools be selected as the host site for the Southwest North Carolina Regional Early College High School, Cabarrus County School Board's voice will be heard through their own representative on the Southwest North Carolina Regional Early College High School Board. Should a proposed aspect prove untenable, support can be withdrawn.


Board Chair signature


Date


Superintendent signature


Date

Kannapolis City Schools Board of Education Endorsement

The Kannapolis City Schools Board of Education supports the decision to hold discussion with Cabarrus County Schools for the purpose of establishing a regional high school.

The Kannapolis Board of Education understands that this is in response to a request for information submitted by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction related to a thematic high school that transcends geographic boundaries and provides the educational framework for 21st Century post-secondary school readiness.

We agree with:

- The governance structure and commit to sending one Kannapolis City Schools Board member to represent us on the Southwest Regional High School Board of Education;
- The funding structure of up to 80% and not more than the average daily membership generated by each student;
- The placement of the school within the Kannapolis City School District with a facility to be provided by Castle and Cooke, Inc. in the downtown Kannapolis area.

Should Kannapolis City Schools be selected as the host site for the Southwest Regional High School, Kannapolis City's School Board voice will be heard through their representative on the Early College High School Board. Should a proposed aspect prove untenable, support can be withdrawn.

It is recognized that this endorsement of the regional high school project is based on a draft proposal, and that final approval by the Kannapolis City School Board of Education will require more specific and detailed information regarding the project.

Danita B. Richard
Board of Education Chair

12-15-10
Date

Pamela Cain
Superintendent

12/16/10
Date

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Cabarrus County Center
715 Cabarrus Avenue West
Concord, N.C. 28027
P. O. Box 387
Concord, NC 28026
Phone: 704 920-3310
Fax: 704 920-3323
Email: heather_jones@ncsu.edu

December 16, 2010

Dr. Barry Shepherd
Superintendent
Cabarrus County Schools
4401 Old Airport Road
North Carolina, NC 28025

Re: Southwest North Carolina Regional Early College High School Support

Dear Dr. Shepherd:

It is with keen interest and great excitement that we embrace the idea of establishing the Southwest North Carolina Regional Early College High School in our region. We need to expand the reach of our educational offerings for our high school students who may not otherwise have the opportunity to complete high school and up to two years of post-secondary work.

By situating this regional high school within Kannapolis and linking the curricular effort to a STEM focus, the effort will be in direct alignment with the work already being undertaken on the North Carolina Research Campus. This concept provides the out-of-the-box thinking which will put our students in the competitive forefront of the global marketplace.

There are several offerings within the 4-H educational tool kit that would provide strong enrichment opportunities for these students within these themes. 4-H is aware that America faces a future of intense global competition with a startling shortage of scientists. To address increased demand for science and technology professionals, 4-H is working to reach a bold goal of engaging one million new young people in science programs by 2013. Cabarrus County 4-H looks forward to partnering with the Southwest North Carolina Regional Early College High School to help reach this goal.

We ask that you continue to keep us apprised of the progress of this effort and stand ready to help you make this a reality.

Sincerely,



Heather Jones
Extension Agent
4-H Youth Development

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
NC Research Campus
600 Laureate Way
Kannapolis, NC 28081
704.250.5400
704.250.5409 (fax)

December 15, 2010

Dr. Barry Shepherd
Superintendent
Cabarrus County Schools
4401 Old Airport Road
North Carolina, NC 28025

Re: Southwest North Carolina Regional Early College High School Support

Dear Dr. Shepherd:

I support the idea of establishing the Southwest North Carolina Regional Early College High School in our region. We need to expand the reach of our educational offerings for our high school students who may not otherwise have the opportunity to complete high school and up to two years of post-secondary work.

By situating this regional high school within Kannapolis and linking the curricular effort to a STEM focus, the effort will be in direct alignment with the work we are already undertaking on the North Carolina Research Campus. This will put our students in a strong competitive position in the global marketplace.

I ask that you continue to keep us apprised of the progress of this effort. Please know that I stand ready to help you make this effort a reality.

Sincerely,

Dr. James L. Oblinger
Professor, Food, Bioprocessing and Nutrition Sciences

December 14, 2010

Dr. Barry Shepherd
Superintendent
Cabarrus County Schools
4401 Old Airport Road
North Carolina, NC 28025

Re: Southwest North Carolina Regional Early College High School Support

Dear Dr. Shepherd:

THE NC STEM Community Collaborative (NC STEM) enthusiastically embraces the idea of establishing the Southwest North Carolina Regional Early College High School in your region. North Carolina needs to expand the reach of effective education programs to high school students who may not otherwise have the opportunity to complete high school and up to two years of post-secondary work, and provide students with the skills in science, technology, engineering & math (STEM) to make them, and their entire region, globally competitive. As you know, NC STEM is dedicated to ensuring all North Carolina children have access to rigorous and relevant STEM programs to provide them with the best choices in life and to bolster the economic competitiveness of their communities.

By situating this regional high school within Kannapolis and linking the curricular effort to a STEM focus, the effort will align directly with the work already undertaken in Cabarrus & Rowan Counties with NC STEM. This region is one of a growing number working with NC STEM to create and connect effective STEM innovations across the state and nation. NC STEM's design process involves community partners – including the Cabarrus County Schools, unique resources like the North Carolina Research Campus, and over 70 others – with whom we have invested with high confidence in the local support for this regional effort. A Regional Early College High School anchor school in Cabarrus County would augment these efforts tremendously, and we are very supportive.

We ask that you continue to keep us apprised of the progress of this effort, and we stand ready to help you make this a reality.

Sincerely,



Karl Rectanus
Leader

Power in Numbers.



The University of North Carolina

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

POST OFFICE BOX 2688, CHAPEL HILL, NC 27515-2688

STEVEN LEATH, PhD – *Vice President for Research*

Telephone: (919) 962-4619 • Fax: (919) 843-4942 • E-mail: sleath@northcarolina.edu

December 16, 2010

Dr. Barry Shepherd
Superintendent
Cabarrus County Schools
4401 Old Airport Road
North Carolina, NC 28025

Re: Southwest North Carolina Regional Early College High School Support

Dear Dr. Shepherd:

It is with keen interest and my full support that I embrace the idea of you establishing the Southwest North Carolina Regional Early College High School in your region. Our state should expand the reach of our educational offerings for our high school students who may not otherwise have the opportunity to complete high school and up to two years of post-secondary work.

By situating this regional high school within Kannapolis and linking the curricular effort to a STEM focus, the effort will be in direct alignment with the research and outreach already being undertaken by the North Carolina Research Campus. Although we do not have undergraduate instruction at the North Carolina Research campus we are most pleased to provide your students with hands on science experience through internships and similar activities. As your concept develops and you identify a campus partner we will be most willing to be involved.

We ask that you continue to keep us apprised of the progress of this effort and stand ready to help you make this a reality.

Sincerely,

Steven Leath

Cc:
Dr. Alan Mabe, Sr. Vice President, Academic Affairs

Constituent Universities
Appalachian State
University

East Carolina
University

Elizabeth City
State University

Fayetteville State
University

North Carolina
Agricultural and
Technical State
University

North Carolina
Central University

North Carolina
State University
at Raleigh

University of
North Carolina
at Asheville

University of
North Carolina
at Chapel Hill

University of
North Carolina
at Charlotte

University of
North Carolina
at Greensboro

University of
North Carolina
at Pembroke

University of
North Carolina
at Wilmington

University of
North Carolina
School of the Arts

Western Carolina
University

Winston-Salem
State University

Constituent High School
North Carolina
School of Science
and Mathematics

An Equal Opportunity/
Affirmative Action
Employer



Rowan-Cabarrus Community College

Post Office Box 1595
Salisbury, North Carolina 28145
704-637-0760
www.rowancabarrus.edu

December 15, 2010

Dr. Barry Shepherd
Superintendent
Cabarrus County Schools
4401 Old Airport Road
North Carolina, NC 28025

Re: Southwest North Carolina Regional High School Support

Dear Dr. Shepherd:

Rowan Cabarrus Community College enthusiastically supports the possibility of establishing the Southwest North Carolina Regional High School in our region. This region needs to expand the reach of biotech and agricultural science educational offerings to our high school students who may not otherwise have the interest or encouragement to complete high school and go on to the emerging fields related to biotech.

By situating this regional high school within Kannapolis and linking the curriculum to a STEM focus, the effort will be in direct alignment with the work we are already supporting on the North Carolina Research Campus and the greater Cabarrus-Rowan community. It compliments a new program, NCSTEM, which will be creating a vision of higher educational attainment in the STEM related fields in concert with the state. Moreover, the new high school provides the out-of-the-box thinking which will put our students in the competitive forefront of the global marketplace.

We ask that you continue to keep us apprised of the progress of this effort and stand ready to help you make this a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol S. Spalding".

Dr. Carol S. Spalding
President

Appendix D

Northwest Response to the Request for Information

Biotechnology Grant Proposal Iredell Statesville/Wilkes/Alexander

Section A

In the fall of 2010, a dream became a reality for the Iredell Statesville School System. The Career Academy and Technical School (CATS) was open for the first year. This first year, Allied Science II, ProStart and Automotive II & III were offered with the plans to extend the offerings in future years. At the Career & Technical Summer Conference, Walter Dalton gave a report from the JOBS Commission Study. In his speech, he talked about starting an Agriscience and Biotechnology school. This gained the attention of the group from Iredell County. After the conference, state officials were contacted to determine how Iredell County could be a part of this exciting adventure. The CATS was a perfect place to start such a school. Wilkes and Alexander County were asked to join Iredell because of our share economic base from the Agriscience industry. The group also works with all of the community colleges located in their counties. Wilkes Community college has an instructor in the Agriculture division who has developed a state of the art x-ray seed lab. Iredell County has a biofuel plant where more research is being conducted daily. This Agriscience Biotechnology School could become a hub for many schools in North Carolina, as well as the nation, to develop courses with live experience in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). With the modern technology that would be offered at this school, we are confident that students will be able to compete in such a globally competitive market. By joining forces with Wilkes and Alexander Counties, the cooperative efforts will greatly enhance the outcomes of such a school.

Commitments from Superintendents from the following counties have been secured: Iredell Statesville Schools, Alexander county, and Wilkes County. (Please find attached Chair signatures from respective BOEs)

Higher Education commitments from the region include: Mitchell Community College, Wilkes Community College, North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, Johnson and Wales University, North Carolina Research Campus.

Businesses supporting the regional school include: McLain Farms – Biofuel and Canola Oil Production, Daddy Pete Farms – Organic composting operation, Metrolina Greenhouses, Tyson, Iredell Memorial Hospital, Davis Regional Medical Center, Lake Norman Regional Medical. Commitment letters are attached or have been requested from each institution and business.

Non-Profit Support includes: North Carolina Cooperative Extension, STEM Coalition, Golden Leaf Foundation, National FFA Organization, 4-H Youth Development Organization

Section B

Greater Statesville has many factors that make it a wise choice for agriscience and biotechnology sector growth. Statesville's superior location at the intersection of I-77 and I-40 puts the community within easy reach of UNC-Charlotte (38 miles), Baptist Hospital/Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem (39 miles) and the North Carolina Research Campus (NCRC) in Kannapolis (26 miles).

The Greater Statesville region (Iredell County) is currently home to a thriving agricultural sector; ranking first in North Carolina in beef and dairy production and fourth in egg production. The area is also a significant food and beverage processing and distribution center with facilities operated by industry leaders such as Tyson, Purina, Millard and Bridgeford.

From the Biotech perspective, Statesville is home to Kewaunee Scientific, a worldwide leader in the development and manufacture of lab equipment and technical furniture for the biotech industry, and is the location of one of the largest medical device manufacturing facilities in the Charlotte region, Zimmer Orthopedic.

The Greater Statesville Development Corporation (GSDC) has identified Life Sciences as one of its target sectors, and, in conjunction with the City of Statesville and the Town of Troutman, is currently developing the Barium Springs Technology Park, a 477 acre project focusing on biotechnology and capitalizing on its proximity to the NCRC. Assets: McLain Farms – Biofuel and Canola Oil Production, Daddy Pete Farms – Organic Composting Operation, Rocky Creek Veterinary Service – Dairy Farm/Large Animal Veterinarian Practice, Shiloh Nursery – Plant Research and Development

- Agriscience Economic Importance

County Rank in NC Agricultural Commodities			
County			
Commodity	Iredell	Alexander	Wilkes
Dairy Cows	1	5	14
Chickens	6	5	11
Broilers	N/A	12	2
All Cattle	1	14	4
Beef Cattle	5	17	3
Hay (Tons)	3	18	10
Cash Receipts	23	14	4
Total Cash Receipts	34	30	7
Avg. Age of Farmer	57.7	56.3	57.2
Avg. Farm Size (Acres)	115	88	100
Percentage of Land in Farms (Acres)	38	33	23

- Priorities of the JOBS Commission Report / Findings

Northwest Regional High School will offer inter-disciplinary courses that will correlate with Cluster I of the JOBS Commission Report. (Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, with a focus on Agriscience)

The regional consortium recognizes the importance and vast need for a regional school of biotechnology and agriscience. With an ever-changing agriculture environment, it is critical that students are equipped with 21st Century skills that make them viable vessels in the workforce they will enter. The aforementioned institutions, local businesses, assets, and non-profit organizations also recognize the urgency to develop a stimulating center of knowledge for these students if they are to provide a sound foundation for the future of agriculture and biotechnology.

Section C

The existing schools within our region have a strong enrollment in biotechnology and agriscience courses. 13 of the 13 middle schools offer the Exploring Careers curriculum which focuses on the diverse biotech related jobs that are available to students today. Shadowing opportunities are being provided to students and more students are requesting to shadow in the field of biotechnology. Nine of the ten high schools have agricultural programs offering a wide variety of courses related to agriscience and biotechnology. As we begin to develop career clusters in our high schools, one school in Iredell County has adopted an agriscience focus for their Freshman Small Learning Community. This has proven

successful in that a 96% pass rate was accomplished in the 1st quarter. As our agriculture enrollment has increased from 1544 to 2028 in four years, an increased focus on agriscience and other biotech related courses have also increased. To impact student learning, classes and opportunities will be developed with emphasis on STEM. By utilizing the Small Learning Community approach, student center learning with a hands-on approach will be the focus for our program. As students explore in the field of agriscience and biotechnology, they will gain skills and learn to value the more rigorous subjects of math and science.

County	Increase enrollment 2006-2009	Female Enrollment 2009
Alexander	13 students	77 – increase of 18 over 4 yrs
Iredell	220 students	333- increase of 86 over 4 yrs
Wilkes	252 students	185– increase of 124 over 4 yrs

The Career Academy and Technical School currently houses an Allied Health program, Culinary Arts program, as well as a state of the art Automotive Technology Center. These three programs would benefit from the addition of the regional high school to incorporate a research base in each field of study. The addition of the regional high school to such a campus as CATS can only increase the graduation rate by providing additional avenues for student success.

Section D

The regional consortium’s connectivity to the North Carolina Research Campus and North Carolina State University is diverse. We are located in close proximity to the NCRC and to the Piedmont Research facility in Rowan county. We also have connections with NC Cooperative Extension Service in each county allowing quick access to the latest research developed through NC State. With the network of major Interstates 40 and 77, as well as Hwy 421, we feel that the geographic location of the regional school at CATS would be most ideal. Furthermore, 14 of the 18 Agriculture teachers within our region have degrees from NC State University in the field of Agriculture Education. This connectivity provides a strong base for our teachers as they are members of agriculture-based associations and organizations

that also have ties to NCSU. Student participation in FFA and 4H events are also a big part of the Agriculture curriculum and have proven to be key components of each program when marketing them to new students. As we continue to branch out into more research-based instruction in biotechnology at the community college level, we seek to build a rich connection with NCRC as well. The Greater Statesville region is geographically proximate to the NCRC (26 miles). The GSDC has worked closely with Marjorie Benbow at the Charlotte office of the North Carolina Biotechnology Center in the development of a strategy for the Barium Springs Technology Park and for the biotechnology sector in general. A critical step in the implementation of that strategy is workforce development and training.

- Alliances with Dr. Beth Wilson (NCSU), Dr. Blake Brown (NCRC), Joe Hampton (Piedmont Research Station), David Harris (NCFFA)
(Letters of Commitment are in process.)

Section E

The Northwest Regional School will be housed at the Career Academy and Technical School located in Troutman, NC as part of the Iredell Statesville School System. The proximity of the Northwest Regional School to partnering counties is within 15 miles of Alexander County and 30 miles of Wilkes County. Mitchell Community College is located six miles from CATS, Wilkes Community College, 46 miles; NCSU, 149 miles; NC A&T, 67 miles respectively. The regional school is also located 15 miles from the Piedmont Research Station and 96 miles from the Mountain Horticultural Corps Research Station. The North Carolina Research Center is located just 21 miles to the southeast of our campus.

The Career Academy & Technical School is located at a former manufacturing facility containing three buildings on 36 acres. The campus encompasses over 260,000 square feet of space providing many opportunities for expansion. The existing school facility has classroom space as well as a computer lab and two Allied Health labs that may be utilized by the Northwest Regional High School.

BOE Endorsement for Northwest Regional High School

The Iredell Statesville School System Board of Education supports the Iredell Statesville School systems' discussion with Alexander County Schools and Wilkes County Schools with the purpose of establishing a regional biotechnology high school located in Troutman, NC.

The Iredell Statesville School Systems Board of Education understands that this is in response to a request for information submitted by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction related to a thematic high school that transcends geographic boundaries and provides the educational framework for the 21st Century post-secondary school readiness.

We agree with:

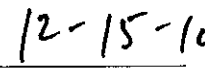
- The governance structure and commit to sending one Iredell Statesville School Board member to represent us on the Northwest Regional High School Board of Education;
- The funding structure of up to 80% and not more than the average daily membership generated by each student.
- The placement of the school will be at the Career Academy and Technical School (CATS) located in Troutman, NC with the facilities provided by Iredell Statesville School System.

Should CATS be selected as the host site for the Northwest Regional High School, Iredell Statesville Schools Board of Education voice will be heard through their representatives on the Northwest Regional High School governance board. Should a proposed aspect prove untenable, support can be withdrawn.


BOE Chair Signature


Date


Superintendent Signature


Date

BOE Endorsement for Northwest Regional High School

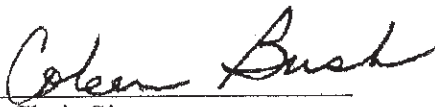
The Wilkes County School System Board of Education supports the Iredell Statesville School systems' discussion with Alexander County Schools and Wilkes County Schools with the purpose of establishing a regional biotechnology high school located in Troutman, NC.

The Wilkes County School Systems Board of Education understands that this is in response to a request for information submitted by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction related to a thematic high school that transcends geographic boundaries and provides the educational framework for the 21st Century post-secondary school readiness.

We agree with:

- The governance structure and commit to sending one Iredell Statesville School Board member to represent us on the Northwest Regional High School Board of Education;
- The funding structure of up to 80% and not more than the average daily membership generated by each student.
- The placement of the school will be at the Career Academy and Technical School (CATS) located in Troutman, NC with the facilities provided by Iredell Statesville School System.

Should CATS be selected as the host site for the Northwest Regional High School, Wilkes County Schools Board of Education voice will be heard through their representatives on the Northwest Regional High School governance board. Should a proposed aspect prove untenable, support can be withdrawn.


BOE Chair Signature

12/15/10
Date


Superintendent Signature

12-14-10
Date

BOE Endorsement for Northwest Regional High School

The Alexander County School System Board of Education supports the Iredell Statesville School systems' discussion with Alexander County Schools and Wilkes County Schools with the purpose of establishing a regional biotechnology high school located in Troutman, NC.

The Alexander County School Systems Board of Education understands that this is in response to a request for information submitted by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction related to a thematic high school that transcends geographic boundaries and provides the educational framework for the 21st Century post-secondary school readiness.

We agree with:

- The governance structure and commit to sending one Iredell Statesville School Board member to represent us on the Northwest Regional High School Board of Education;
- The funding structure of up to 80% and not more than the average daily membership generated by each student.
- The placement of the school will be at the Career Academy and Technical School (CATS) located in Troutman, NC with the facilities provided by Iredell Statesville School Systems.

Should CATS be selected as the host site for the Northwest Regional High School, Alexander County Schools Board of Education voice will be heard through their representatives on the Northwest Regional High School governance board. Should a proposed aspect untenable, support can be withdrawn.


BOE Chair Signature

12/13/10
Date


Superintendent Signature

12/13/10
Date

Appendix E

Western Response to the Request for Information

REGIONAL SCHOOL OF AGRISCIENCE AND BIOTECHNOLOGY LETTER OF INTEREST FROM THE WESTERN REGION

Western North Carolina may not boast of cities the size of Charlotte or Greensboro but what it lacks in size is replaced by a unique community initiative in which educational, non-profit, and for-profit organizations are working together to foster Agriscience and Biotechnology initiatives that promote sustainable living. Because we believe in the efficacy of a regional school to move the western initiative forward, we respectfully submit the following letter of interest.

A.Partnership Members and Level of Commitment

The current proposal to locate the regional school in western North Carolina is submitted by a consortium of western organizations. Core partners include: Asheville City Schools (ACS), Buncombe County Schools (BCS), Madison County Schools (MCS), and Transylvania County Schools (TCS). Our LEAs effectively serve 35,604 students annually, but not in isolation. Previously established community partnerships build our success, and we are pleased to commit the expertise of partners representing the health, education, and business sectors of western North Carolina (see attached letters of support). Community supporters include: Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College, The Chamber of Commerce, UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy, Gaia Herbs, the NC Arboretum, NC Biotechnology Center, WRESA, etc.

As partners, we commit the following: (1)A liaison to coordinate NCDPI and local consortium communication and ensure compliance with state regulations; (2)LEA consideration of cost-sharing procedures identified by the State; (3)A local core planning committee to explore viable school models and provide curricular expertise; and (4)Recruitment of students, identification of a school facility, and the selection of highly qualified staff; and (5)Stakeholder support. Most importantly, we commit to actualizing our vision of creating an innovative,

specialized secondary school representing the best of academic and entrepreneurial talent. We estimate that the planning process will require a minimum of 12-18 months of effort.

B.Regional Economy: Local Assets & Connection to the JOBS Commission Report

Although education, health services, manufacturing and tourism employ the majority of Asheville Metro area residents, Agriculture and Biotechnology are a critical part of the western North Carolina economic picture. According to the Asheville Chamber of Commerce, October 2010 labor statistics for the Asheville Metro Area (Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, and Madison Counties), show there are 87 Agriculture industry establishments with employment of nearly 1,000 and at an average weekly wage of \$481.64 (Source: NC Employment Security Commission QCEW compiled by local Chamber of Commerce researchers). From 2006-2010, the region experienced a 3.6% growth in establishments along with a 16.6% increase in the average weekly wage. Similarly, from 2006-2010 the percentage of establishments conducting research and development in the Engineering, Physical, and Life Sciences, including Agriculture and Biotechnology, increased by 60%, along with an average employment increase of 78%.

Growth in each sector is partially attributed to western region assets, including: AdvantageWest and the NC Biotechnology Center; post-secondary Agriscience programs of study; the Biotechnology programs of Appalachian State, Western Carolina, UNC-Asheville, and A-B Tech; Blue Ridge Food Ventures; the NC Community College Bionetwork and Biobusiness Center; the USDA Forest Service Southern Research Station; the Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center; and the Bent Creek Institute.

The growing western NC sustainable agricultural movement supports the JOBS Commission recommendation that the western region consider piloted educational programs in the areas of green business development and tourism. Blue Ridge Food Ventures (BRFV),

established in 2005, was North Carolina's first small business incubator specifically for farmers and food entrepreneurs. Located on the campus of A-B Tech, BRFV and its emphasis on locally grown products promotes tourist and purchasing activity, while representing the blending of economic and educational partnerships highlighted by the JOBS Commission. A new regional school could follow a similar model. We envision creating a school with a hybrid combination of face-to-face and virtual learning opportunities (through A-B Tech) designed to involve our high school youth in crop research and product/food development integrated with advanced energy building technologies (use of solar panels, water capture, raising crops for biodiesel). Between ACS's highly successful 9th-12th grade School of Inquiry and Life Sciences (a New Schools and Gates Foundation initiative) and BCS's innovative Early College with A-B tech (grades 9-13), we possess the local expertise to create and sustain inquiry-based learning environments.

C. Level of Student Interest and Impact on Student Achievement, Graduation Rates, and Under-represented populations

We believe that interest for a new school will begin with students currently enrolled in local Agriscience and Biotechnology courses. Data show the following percentage of LEA students enrolled in such courses (ACS - .5%; BCS – 6%; MCS – 9%; TCS-7% - Source: NCWise Data). These percentages represent 2,000 students, the majority of whom are 9th-12th graders. There is room for growth, as the majority of involved youth are Caucasian males or females. The lack of diversity in these courses is not reflective of the greater regional diversity, including growing socioeconomic concerns (LEA Free and Reduced Lunch percentages range from 48-65%). Other Examples: Asheville City Schools' population (3,891 students) is 43% minority, but the lack of a district Agriscience program limits opportunities. Similarly, BCS identifies 7% of its population (2,000 students) who are Limited English Proficient, with few in Agriscience.

Educational research proves that relevance is critical to effective learning for at-risk,

disadvantaged, or limited English proficient students. The benefit of a new regional school is the opportunity to provide tactile learning experiences that foster entrepreneurial and academic skills for youth. By providing an educational environment in which youth perfect methods, produce products, and engage in research methods designed to support local farmers and businesses, we will strengthen our community and increase the number of relevant programs to improve graduation rates and academic performance.

D. Connectivity to the NC Research Campus and North Carolina State University


The Agriscience curriculum currently utilized in K-12 public schools is an NC State driven curriculum. Agriculture teachers in western North Carolina regularly communicate with Mr. David Harris, an NC State employee and the Western Region Agricultural Education Coordinator housed at the Fletcher research facility. The NC Arboretum, a key science partner for our LEAs, is also part of the NC University System and regularly translates university research into innovative outdoor classroom learning experiences for our K-12 students.

E. Proposed Facility We recommend housing the regional school at Valley Springs Middle School (VSMS) in Asheville, NC, and creating a “school within a school” model. Effective August 2011, the school will transition 6th graders to a new intermediate school, leaving 12 available rooms. Facility renovations are necessary to transition classrooms to laboratory settings, but the school provides youth with a cafeteria, gymnasium, and easy access off of Interstate 26. Limited land use at Valley Springs is not a barrier, as a partnership with TC Roberson High School and the LEED certified intermediate school (within walking distance of VSMS) will provide youth with an outdoor classroom, greenhouse, and storm water cistern. The geographic size and winter weather challenges of our western partnership require further planning to identify school outposts in Madison and Transylvania counties.

A regional school of Agriscience and Biotechnology should be placed in western North Carolina because it can succeed. We want to create a model that takes education in North Carolina to a higher level of relevancy, and our signatures below are the first step in that commitment.


REQUIRED SIGNATURES

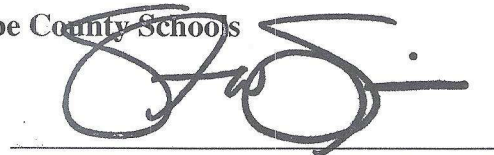
Asheville City Schools


Allen Johnson
Superintendent

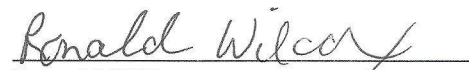

Gene Bell
Board of Education Chairperson

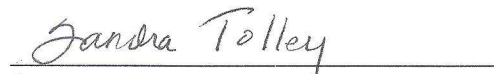
Buncombe County Schools


Tony Baldwin
Superintendent


Steve Sizemore
Board of Education Chairperson


Madison County Schools


Ronald Wilcox
Superintendent


Sandra Tolley
Board of Education Chairperson

Transylvania County Schools


Jeff McDaris
Superintendent


Chris Whitmire
Board of Education Chairperson

SEE ATTACHED LETTERS OF SUPPORT FROM COMMUNITY PARTNERS



Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College

Office of the President

340 Victoria Road
Asheville, NC 28801
(828) 254-1921
abtech.edu

December 14, 2010

Mr. Rob Hines, NCDPI Director of LEA Projects
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
301 N. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Mr. Hines:

On behalf of Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College (A-B Tech), I wish to express strong support for the establishment of a Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology in western North Carolina. A-B Tech houses the BioNetwork, a statewide life sciences initiative, at our Enka campus. This program has flourished and provided leadership in areas tied to agriscience, such as the natural products industry.

A-B Tech's Biotechnology program maintains one-plus-one agreements with Blue Ridge, Caldwell, Catawba Valley, Haywood, Isothermal, Mayland, McDowell, Southwestern, Western Piedmont, and Wilkes community colleges. These colleges provide the first year of credits; then students transfer to A-B Tech for their Biotechnology courses resulting in an associate degree in Biotechnology. Additionally, A-B Tech supports a two-plus-two program for Biotech students transferring to universities across the state. The location of the new Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology here will benefit from established programs, relationships, and facilities supporting the success of such an effort.

Historically and to this day, agriculture is recognized as vital to the regional economy and benefits from the strength of NC State's Agriculture Extension Service, the Bent Creek Institute, the NC Arboretum, and the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project, among others. Economic development organizations such as the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, AdvantageWest, and the Asheville HUB highlight the importance of saving farmland supporting local foods, view sheds, and the farming economy.

I appreciate the time and consideration the Planning Commission will take on the proposal to host a new Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology in western North Carolina. Please do not hesitate to call me at (828) 254-1921, ext. 112 or email me at hdunn@abtech.edu if you need any other information regarding this partnership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hank Dunn', written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Hank Dunn, President



The NORTH CAROLINA
ARBORETUM

AN AFFILIATE INSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSITY *of* NORTH CAROLINA

December 8, 2010

Mr. Rob Hines, NCDPI Director of LEA Project
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
301 N. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

RE: Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology in Western North Carolina

Dear Mr. Hines and Members of the NC Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission:

On behalf of The North Carolina Arboretum of The University of North Carolina, I am pleased to write in support of establishing a Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology in Western North Carolina. As an affiliate organization of the UNC system with a particular interest in biotechnology advancement in the region, the Arboretum engages local K-12, post-secondary, and community programs in Agriscience and Biotechnology education.

The North Carolina Arboretum has established the Bent Creek Institute to conserve and capitalize on the rich botanical diversity and long botanical medicine heritage of our region. Other organizations in our area are joining together in building an integrative health economic sector that also benefits the health and wellness of our families and children. A school here supporting this growing dimension of public life will not only align our students with current skills and abilities related to life science, but will also support state efforts to strengthen STEM education and help prepare our students to compete in the global economy in which we all now operate. This rich mix of educational, governmental and corporate assets and programs in the region and state represent a substantial resource on which this school may draw. Considering both the regional uniqueness of our flora, our agricultural and health-related heritage, and our emphasis on merging education with place-based economic development, there is no better place or more natural fit for this school. Placement here would provide students with a unique learning opportunity woven into the educational and economic direction of the region.

The North Carolina Arboretum stands ready to be helpful in the establishment or the programs of the school. I can be reached at 828-665-2492 or gbriggs@ncarboretum.org.

We appreciate your positive consideration of the western region proposal to host a new regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology. It will succeed here.

Sincerely,

George Briggs, Executive Director



December 10, 2010

Mr. Rob Hines, NCDPI Director of LEA Project
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
301 N. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Re: Letter of Support for the Proposed North Carolina Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology

Dear Mr. Hines and the NC Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission:

It is with great pleasure that the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce provides this letter of support for the outstanding effort to establish a Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology in Western North Carolina. We believe that the blending of local K-12, post-secondary, and community expertise in the area of Agriscience and Biotechnology education and training is critical for providing the twenty-first century skills required for growing this economic cluster.

Western North Carolina is an ideal location for the proposed school, complementing our regional workforce and economic development efforts to align education and training efforts for target cluster talent development programs in Buncombe, Madison, Henderson, and Transylvania counties. We have seen an overall increase for the Agriculture industry in our Asheville MSA with approx. 1,000 jobs and 90 establishments. We have also experienced a substantial increase in businesses specifically classified as "Physical/Engineering/Biological Research," which includes Agriculture and Biotechnology. Over the past five years, this increase has boosted wages and employment in this industry.

We would support the new school in multiple ways through our Partners In Education programs including worksite tours, related summer camps and other career related programs in our region. The location of the proposed school would be ideal for partnering with our industry partners. If additional information about our involvement in this partnership is requested, please do not hesitate to contact Laura Copeland at 828.258-6126.

We respectfully request that the Planning Commission carefully consider the Western Region Proposal to host a new regional school of Agriscience and Biotechnology. We believe this is a critical step toward ensuring continued academic, economic, and social success in the Appalachian region.

Sincerely,

Laura Copeland
VP President Workforce Development/Public Policy
Development/Public Policy

Benjamin Teague
Senior VP Economic Development



Bent Creek INSTITUTE

December 8, 2010

Mr. Rob Hines, NCDPI Director of LEA Project
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
301 N. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

RE: Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology in Western North Carolina

Dear Mr. Hines and Members of the NC Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission:

It is with great pleasure that the Bent Creek Institute, Inc. endorses the effort to establish a Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology in Western North Carolina. As an organization that advances the scientific and economic opportunity in our region to deploy biotechnology research, agricultural production and advanced biomanufacturing, we welcome the blending of local K-12, post-secondary, and community education in support of these purposes.

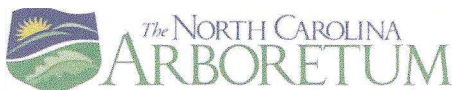
Our success in building economic opportunity for our citizens depends not only on a broader understanding of the value of our resident biodiversity, but also leveraging that understanding into awareness, skills and abilities that can be deployed in the emerging economy. A school here focused on the workforce development requirements of this new sector will provide our students with the increased ability to work and live here as adults. Our medical, business, and agricultural communities have embraced the initiative to make Western North Carolina a national center for integrative health. Where better could students be educated in the societal benefits of agriscience and biotechnology?

We heartily encourage the Planning Commission to consider carefully the western region proposal to host a new regional school of Agriscience and Biotechnology.

If the Bent Creek Institute, Inc. can be helpful in the planning or program development for the new school, we would be pleased to participate. And, as a member of the NC Biotechnology Center Board of Directors, I would be glad to help build collaboration there, as well. I may be reached at 828-665-2492 or gbriggs@ncarboretum.org.

Sincerely,

George Briggs, Chair
Bent Creek Institute, Inc. Board of Directors





December 14, 2010

Mr. Rob Hines, NCDPI Director of LEA Projects
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
301 N. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Mr. Hines:

I am writing to express the enthusiasm and strong support of the BioNetwork BioBusiness Center for establishment of a Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology in western North Carolina. For over six years, the BioBusiness Center has engaged with a wide range of partners, including public schools in the region and the Western Regional Education Service Alliance, in building western North Carolina's value-added agriculture and life science economy.

The establishment of the Regional School will create a critical educational engine for the region's continued growth in the areas of agriculture, biotechnology and other life sciences. The business, economic development, education and research futures of our region would be advanced by this new regional focal point, creating synergy among life science educators at all levels and presenting new opportunities for partnership within the communities we serve.

Our region is an ideal location for blending K-12, post-secondary and community expertise. The Regional School would be able to capitalize on existing partnerships among educators, scientists and businesses to support a creative and effective learning environment for the youth of western North Carolina. The BioBusiness Center anticipates expanding its science and entrepreneurship education outreach to communities across the region should the project be funded.

We are very excited to learn that the Planning Commission is considering the western region to host a new Regional School and pledge our support to ensure its success and integration into biotechnology and life science developments in the region. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like more information about our involvement in this partnership. We urge the Commission to view this much needed resource as a critical step toward ensuring continued success in North Carolina's western region.

Sincerely,

K. Paul Knott
Manager

BioBusiness Center

at Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College, Enka Campus, 1463 Sand Hill Road, Suite 102, Candler, NC 28715
Phone: 828.254.1921, Ext. 5844 Fax: 828.281.9879 Email: BioBusiness@abtech.edu



December 15, 2010

Mr. Rob Hines, NCDPI Director of LEA Projects
North Carolina Department of Public Information
301 N. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

RE: Letter of Support

Dear Mr. Hines and the NC Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School of Planning Commission:

Gaia Herbs, Inc. is writing this letter to show our support in the effort to establish a Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology in Western North Carolina. We are very excited that a Regional School is being considered for this area for several reasons:

First, Gaia Herbs uses Biotechnology in our manufacturing processes, which is the making of Dietary Supplements. Recruiting for open positions would be much easier for us if we had a pool of candidates that are local to the region and who are already trained in Biotechnology. Currently we have to send our employees to a training class that can take away from our production time.

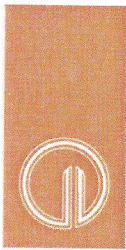
Second, we are aware of other companies, like us, in the area that would be able to use this school as a resource, thus helping all of us to become an economic force by having local talent and help.

If additional information about involvement in this partnership is requested, please do not hesitate to call me at (828) 883-5907 or e-mail at kmb@gaiaherbs.com.

Thank you for considering our support of this initiative.

Sincerely,

Kara Bailey
Human Resource Manager



**North
Carolina
Biotechnology
Center**

WESTERN OFFICE

21 Grady Parris Lane

Asheville, NC 28806-9314

USA

828-670-3394

fax 828-670-3396

December 15, 2010

Mr. Rob Hines, NCDPI Director of LEA Projects
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
301 N. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

RE: Support for School of Agriscience and Biotechnology in Western North Carolina

Dear Mr. Rob Hines and the NC Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission:

The Western Office of the North Carolina Biotechnology Center provides enthusiastic support to the effort to establish a Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology in western North Carolina. The opportunity is ripe for blending current regional K-12 and post-secondary educational resources with community expertise in Agriscience and Biotechnology employment. These synergies position the region exceptionally well for hosting and establishing a strong learning environment for the youth of western North Carolina. These diverse resources come together in a region that is widely recognized nationally and internationally for its unique biodiversity.

We believe that western North Carolina is the perfect location for this newly proposed school. Placement here would provide students with a unique learning opportunity woven into the educational and economic diversity of the region. Using the tools of biotechnology, the region and the state can grow more crops on less land, grow new, more nutritious crops, and find new uses for existing crops. A regional school of Agriscience and Biotechnology will provide students with the necessary life science skills to compete in this increasingly global environment.

If additional information about our involvement in this partnership is requested, please do not hesitate to contact me at (828) 670-3394 or steven_casey@ncbiotech.org.

We ask you to support this initiative for western North Carolina. The proposal to host a new regional school of Agriscience and Biotechnology ensures economic and academic success for the region.

Sincerely,

Steven M. Casey, MBA
Interim Executive Director, Western Office
Vice President, Statewide Development

ASHEVILLE

CHARLOTTE

GREENVILLE

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK

WILMINGTON

WINSTON-SALEM

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

David Harris, Western Region Agricultural Education Coordinator
Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center
455 Research Drive
Mills River, NC 28759

828.684.3562 (Telephone)
828.684.8715 (Fax)
david_e_harris@ncsu.edu
<http://www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/cals/>

December 9, 2010

Mr. Rob Hines, NCDPI Director of LEA Project
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
301 N. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Mr. Hines:

It is with great pleasure that I, as a representative of North Carolina State University, endorse the effort to establish a Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology in western North Carolina. The blending of local K-12, post-secondary, and community expertise in the area of Agriscience and Biotechnology education, coupled with the existing employment opportunities of the region, uniquely qualifies western North Carolina as a site for the regional school.

Western North Carolina is a suitable location for this newly proposed school because the region has a biotechnology presence at the Enka A-B Tech campus and at N.C. State University's Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center. Aquaculture, forestry, soils, nursery crops, field crops, apples, and specialty crops research is conducted at the Research and Extension Center. NCSU researchers and project leaders could enhance the learning environment of the new school by being guest speakers and hosting fieldtrips to their facility. In addition, there is a distinct possibility that some students from the new school could continue their education as part-time help during the summer months, thus contributing to the local economy.

The western region has strong high school agricultural education programs, which would potentially help recruit students for the new school. Research projects conducted at the new school could easily double as an agriculture student's Supervised Agricultural Experience program.

I respectfully request that the Planning Commission give careful consideration to the western region proposal to host a new regional school of Agriscience and Technology.

Sincerely,



David Harris
Western Region Agricultural Education Coordinator



Reading Riding and Retrofit

111 Westwood Road
Asheville NC 28804
December 8, 2010

Mr. Rob Hines, NCDPI Director of LEA Projects
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
301 N. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

RE: Letter of Support

To Mr. Rob Hines and the NC Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission:

It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that Reading Riding and Retrofit (RRR) provides support to the effort to establish a Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology in western North Carolina. Reading Riding and Retrofit is a community-based program whose mission is to support schools as they lead our community toward sustainability. The 54 schools in our program in the Buncombe County School District, Asheville City School District and the three county charter schools, are actively engaged in providing green facilities and educational opportunities to their students. We know that as the children learn, so learns the community. We are currently working under an EPA Climate Showcase Grant to bring energy efficient upgrades and awareness to the schools.

We believe that western North Carolina is the perfect location for this newly proposed school, because this area has already proven itself as a leader in transforming NC farm economy from tobacco to new crops and markets. WNC leads the state in the number of small farms and yet the medium age of the farmer is getting older each year. Our country needs to reinvigorate the interest of students in agribusiness and biotechnology to transform our economy to one that is more sustainable and regenerative. This is a great opportunity to do so.

We know the importance of local K-12, post-secondary, and community expertise in the area of Agriscience and Biotechnology education and employment positions and are excited about the opportunity for this region to host and establish a strong learning environment for the youth of western North Carolina. In another one of our projects, RRR is working with local agriculture experts to develop NC DPI approved sustainable agriculture/permaculture curriculum for high school students that will provide them with a professional certification at the end of their course work.

We will provide additional resources to this project by making our curriculum available for this effort. This curriculum will create a cadre of experienced permaculture practitioners who could open their own businesses and or expand their educational future on the strong foundation of this fundamental knowledge.

If additional information about our involvement in this partnership is requested, please do not hesitate to contact me at 828-505-1831, robincape@gmail.com.

We respectfully request that the Planning Commission carefully consider the western region proposal to host a new regional school of Agriscience and Biotechnology. We believe this is a critical step toward ensuring continued academic, economic, and social success in the Appalachian region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robin Cape". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Robin Cape
Project Coordinator
Reading, Riding and Retrofit



UNC
ESHelman
SCHOOL OF PHARMACY

THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

BEARD HALL
CAMPUS BOX 7355
CHAPEL HILL, NC 27599-7355

T 919.966.1122
F 919.966.6919

December 14, 2010

Mr. Rob Hines, Director of LEA Projects
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
301 N. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

ROBERT A. BLOUIN, PharmD
Dean
Vaughn and Nancy Bryson Distinguished Professor

Dear Mr. Hines:

I would like to lend my support for the creation and development of a Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology for western North Carolina. As the Dean of the UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy such an initiative would be in alignment with our School's long term strategic plan. As you may know, this past spring the UNC Board of Governors approved the creation of a satellite campus in Asheville for our School. It should be noted that our School is highly ranked nationally and internationally in pharmacy education and pharmaceutical sciences.

It is expected that our satellite campus in Asheville will admit up to forty students per year into our four year professional doctoral program. Students entering this program usually have a strong academic background in chemistry, biology, and life sciences. In addition, we expect to launch new research initiatives in the areas of health outcomes and natural products chemistry. To the latter point, faculty from our School's Division of Medicinal Chemistry and Natural Products have existing relationships with the Bent Creek Institute and North Carolina Arboretum. The development of a Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology in western North Carolina will further enhance collaborative opportunities for us in this region. Both our academic and research missions of the School will be enhance by this new initiative. I support this proposal with a high level of enthusiasm.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance to you in this matter.

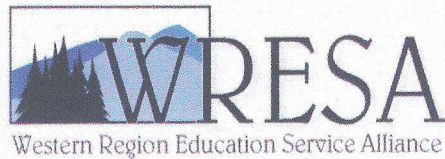
Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Blouin, PharmD
Dean and Vaughn and Nancy Bryson Distinguished Professor

RAB/ble

cc: Kevin Almond
Lori Brown

M/DeansOfc/2010/RegionalSchoolofAgriscience



P.O. Box 1709
Enka, NC 28728
828-418-0011
Fax: 828-665-7710

Janet L. Webster, Ed.D.
Director

December 9, 2010

Western Region Education Service Alliance
P.O. Box 1709
Enka, NC 28728
Contact: Janet L. Webster, Ed.D./Director

Mr. Rob Hines, NCDPI Director of LEA Project
301 N. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Mr. Hines and the NC Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission:

The Western Region Education Service Alliance (WRESA) serves the most western 19 North Carolina School Districts by providing a broad array of collaborative education services.

We welcome and support the effort to create a Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology in this part of North Carolina. The WRESA would be a logical and willing partner with this initiative. The regional opportunities for supporting a Regional Agriscience and Biotechnology school combined with the needs of this region to be addressed hold much promise as this area being a viable location.

The rich history of regional collaboration, the need to continue to replace a "tobacco driven" economy in rural areas, with alternative crops and green businesses in this part of Appalachia calls for a clear focus in the biotech and agriscience areas, thus making this geographic region an ideal context in which to develop the Agriscience and Biotechnology school.

The WRESA (currently implementing a small biotech grant) will assist with both planning and operations of this school should it be located here. We are happy to host planning and staff development sessions. We are also able to use the WRESA resources to help establish and market the school by systematic involvement of school district and community leaders. The WRESA is willing to provide representation on critical panels and workgroups associated with initiative.

The operation of a regional Agriscience and Biotechnology school will have the effect of enhancing and enriching in a very relevant way a broad range of school classes and programs. Such a school would be a major resource for the schools as well as the local communities and businesses.

Many thanks for your consideration and support.


Jan Webster Ed.D., Director

Working together for the children of Western North Carolina
<http://www.wresa.org>



**Asheville-Buncombe Sustainable Community Initiatives, Inc.
[ABSCI – an Ashevillehub affiliate]**

December 8, 2010

Mr. Rob Hines, NCDPI Director of LEA Project
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
301 N. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

RE: Letter of Support

Mr. Rob Hines and the NC Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School Planning Commission:

It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that Reading Riding and Retrofit provides support to the effort to establish a Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology in western North Carolina. We believe that the blending of local K-12, post-secondary, and community expertise in the area of Agriscience and Biotechnology education and employment positions this region to host and establish a strong learning environment for the youth of western North Carolina.

We believe that western North Carolina is the perfect location for this newly proposed school, because this area has already proven itself as a leader in transforming NC farm economy from tobacco to new crops and markets. WNC leads the state in the number of small farms and yet the medium age of the farmer is getting older each year. Our country needs to reinvigorate the interest of students in agribusiness and biotechnology to transform our economy to one that is more sustainable and regenerative. This is a great opportunity to do so.

Our organization is an outgrowth of the Asheville Hub, a local think-tank for economic development in Buncombe County. Our mission is to support and encourage the development of local businesses that will create a sustainable and resilient future for our area. This initiative by the schools is one that fits that vision and we work to rally the community, to bring their institutional and organizational capacity to support this effort.

If additional information about our involvement in this partnership is requested, please do not hesitate to contact me at 828-253-5552, Mbp@pvcinc.net.

We respectfully request that the Planning Commission carefully consider the western region proposal to host a new Regional School of Agriscience and Biotechnology. We believe this is a critical step toward ensuring continued academic, economic, and social success in the Appalachian region.

Sincerely,



Mack Pearsall
President

Asheville Buncombe Sustainable Community Initiatives, Inc.

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